THE ART OF WARCRAFT®





FOREWORD

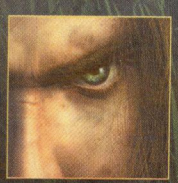
I play games for a living. Hey, someone's gotta do it. More specifically, I help write and edit *Computer Gaming World* magazine every month. It's a ridiculously fun job, and I keep thinking that sooner or later someone's going to wake me up, hand me a pickaxe, and tell me to get back to work on the rock pile.

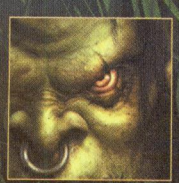
When the fine folks at BradyGames approached me to contribute to this book, my initial reaction was negative. I'm a "journalist," after all. I'm supposed to remain "objective." By writing gushy prose about the awesome art of Warcraft, won't I be revealing myself as just another fanboy?

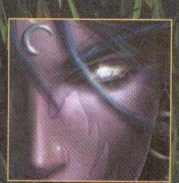
But the truth is, I am just another fanboy. Even game journalists are allowed to have favorite games. And my favorite game, ever, easily, is Warcraft II. For me, it's a game that has it all: Action. Strategy. Two-headed ogres with gas. It's a masterpiece of depth and balance, set in a rich fantasy universe that someone actually bothered to make interesting. Now, with Warcraft III and the upcoming World of Warcraft, Blizzard is finally returning to its flagship universe after many years, and I can't wait. Game design and computer graphics have come a long way since the first two games, and Blizzard's universe, so rich and alive already, is about to gain entirely new dimensions.

I love Warcraft because Blizzard loves Warcraft. It's a universe created with giant heaps of passion, intelligence, and humor. It's inspired game design brought to life by a team of extraordinarily talented artists, given free reign to let their imaginations run wild. But you don't need a "professional gamer" to tell you all this. Just turn the page and see for yourself.

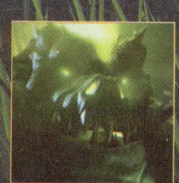
JEFF GREEN
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

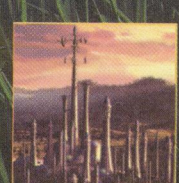

HUMANS 6

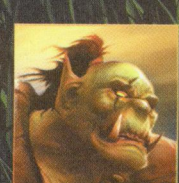

ORCS 28


NIGHT ELVES 56


UNDEAD 82


DEMONS 108


VISIONS OF AZEROTH 122


WORLD OF WARCRAFT 144


MISCELLANEOUS 166








SAMWISE
2000



HUMANS

The Alliance

Pity the poor humans of Azeroth. It should be a time of celebration in Blizzard's fantasy kingdom as they prepare for the coronation of a new king. Instead, they are plunged into a nightmare of chaos and war.

It begins with one man, Medivh, the son of a mortal conjurer and an immortal female Guardian. The Guardian has protected the people of Azeroth from the horrors of other worlds for centuries, and she has raised Medivh to replace her. But Medivh has his own ideas. He studies the dark arts of necromancy and eventually finds what he's looking for: a devil willing to help him conquer the world. And so, a dark portal opens in Azeroth, and through it pour legions of vile creatures called orcs, hulking monsters set on destruction.

Blizzard has consistantly made the human units more sophisticated and complex. Beginning with a small set of units in Warcraft: Orcs & Humans, the "human" side is expanded in Warcraft II to include the elf nation of Quel'thalas and the dwarves of Khaz Modan, who ally with the humans as the orc conquest intensifies. These new units let Blizzard's artists flex their muscles and helped make the "good" side of the game as much fun to play as the evil orcs.

It's amazing how much personality and variety Blizzard can inject into these little units: the squat gait and scrappy demeanor of the dwarves, the light elegance of the elves, the tough conviction of the footmen, the humility of the hard-working peasants. This reaches its apex in Warcraft III, where the 3D engine really brings the units to life. What was once merely implied or simply rendered—peasants chopping wood or riders on horseback charging into battle—is now graphically, wonderfully illustrated.

Thanks to the tremendous artistic talent at Blizzard, amply shown on the next pages, the denizens of Azeroth are more than just "game units," an amalgam of numbers and programming. They're living creatures in a world come alive.

CONCEPT ART

HUMANS

DWARVES – The Blizzard artists truly favor the dwarven race, and this enthusiasm shines through in the character renders and voices. The units on this page are seething with personality in every way imaginable.



DWARVEN
DEMOLITION SQUAD
Warcraft II

DWARF
Warcraft III



MOUNTAIN KING
Warcraft III





RIFLEMAN
Warcraft III

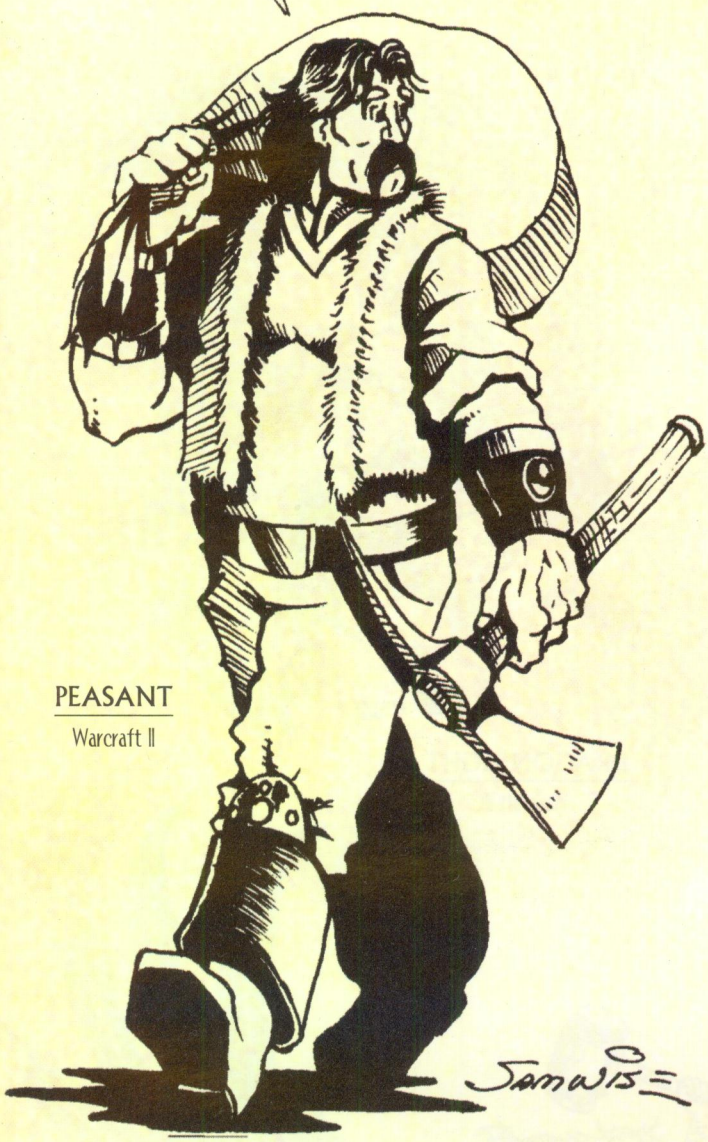
HUMAN WARRIOR

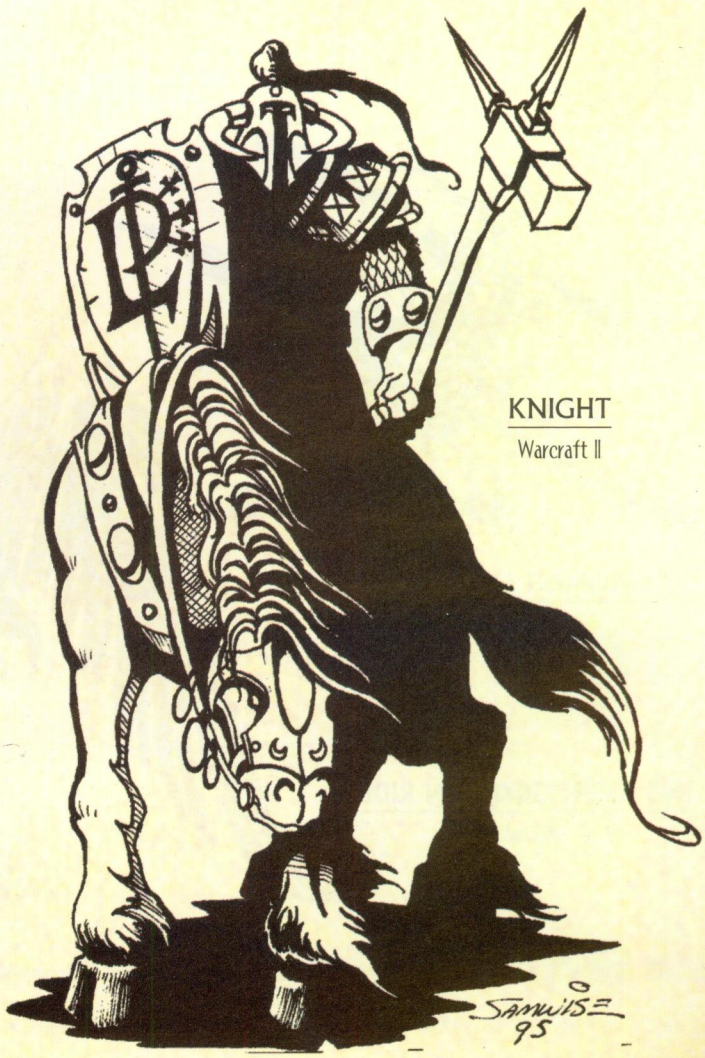
Warcraft III



PEASANT

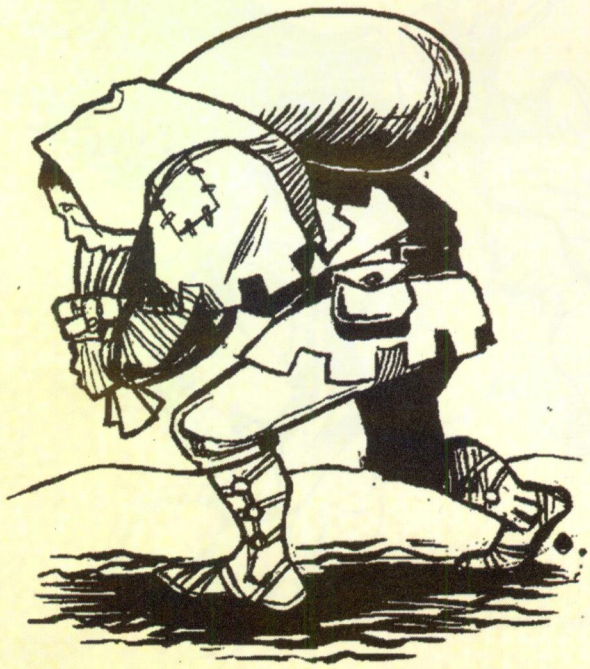
Warcraft II





KNIGHT

Warcraft II



OLD PEASANT

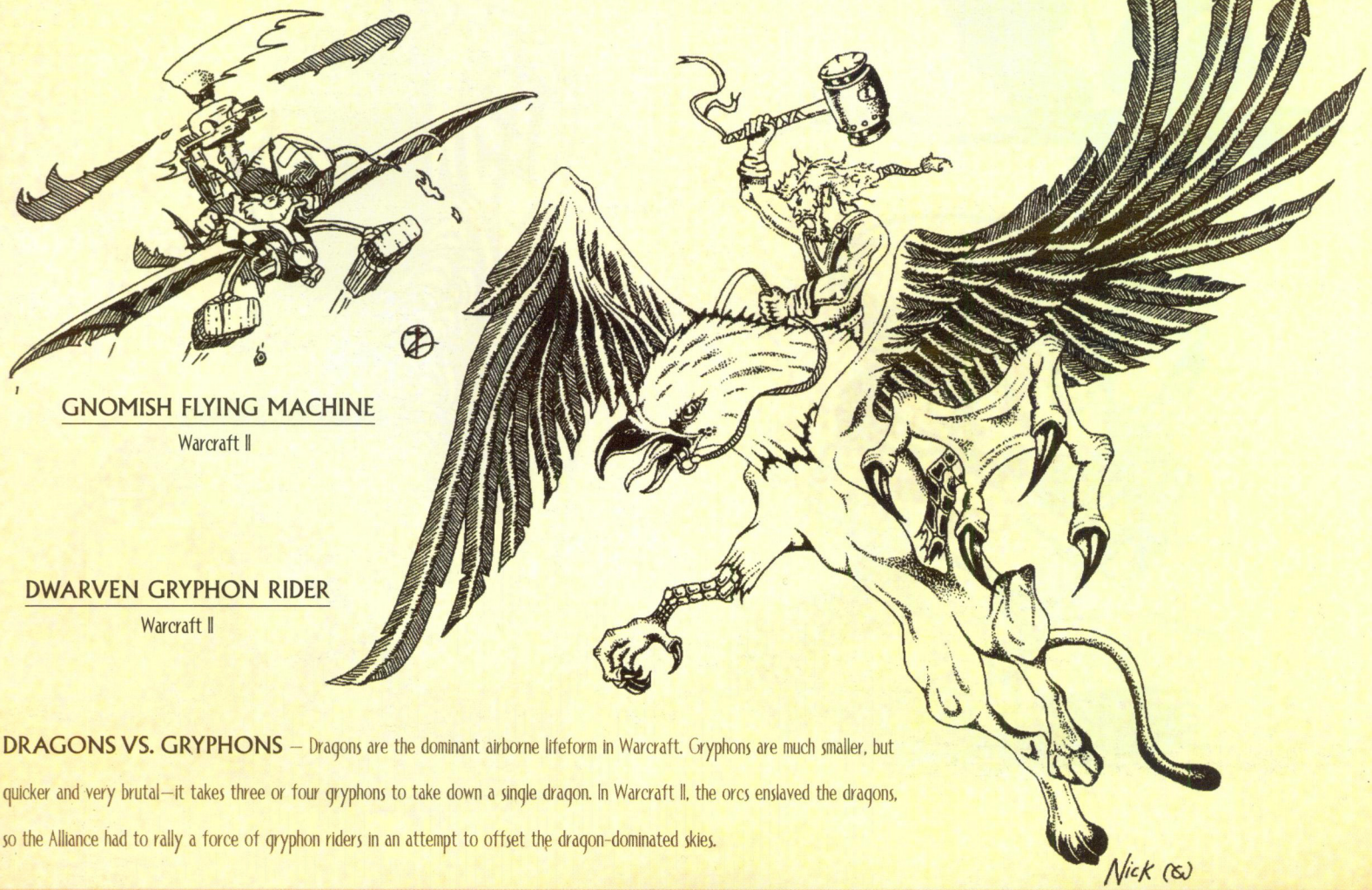
Warcraft: Orcs & Humans



ELF AND TROLL
Warcraft II



DRAGON FIGHT
Warcraft II



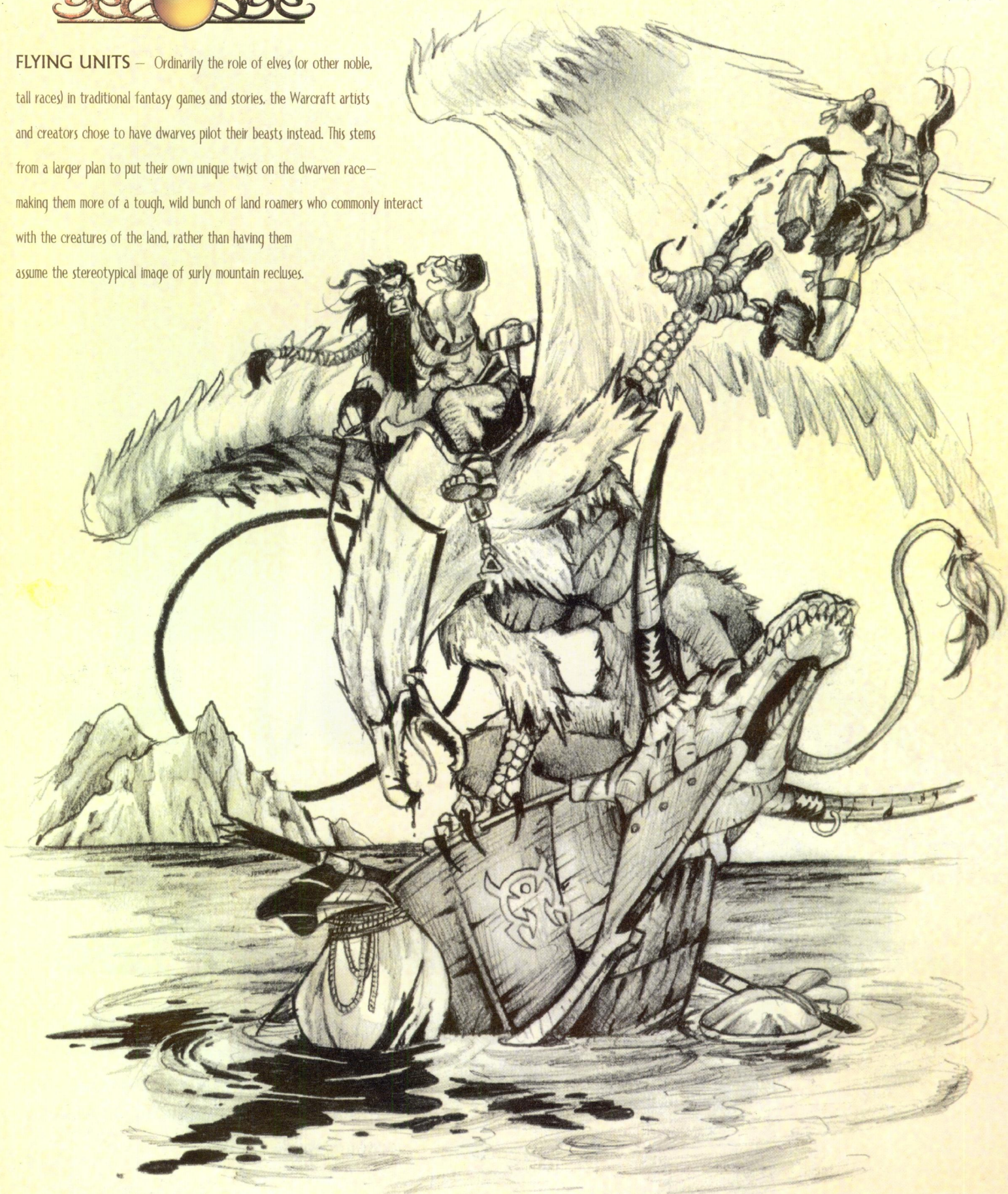
GNOMISH FLYING MACHINE
Warcraft II

DWARVEN GRYPHON RIDER
Warcraft II

DRAGONS VS. GRYPHONS – Dragons are the dominant airborne lifeform in Warcraft. Gryphons are much smaller, but quicker and very brutal—it takes three or four gryphons to take down a single dragon. In Warcraft II, the orcs enslaved the dragons, so the Alliance had to rally a force of gryphon riders in an attempt to offset the dragon-dominated skies.

Nick (&)

FLYING UNITS – Ordinarily the role of elves (or other noble, tall races) in traditional fantasy games and stories, the Warcraft artists and creators chose to have dwarves pilot their beasts instead. This stems from a larger plan to put their own unique twist on the dwarven race—making them more of a tough, wild bunch of land roamers who commonly interact with the creatures of the land, rather than having them assume the stereotypical image of surly mountain recluses.



GRYPHON RIDER
Warcraft III

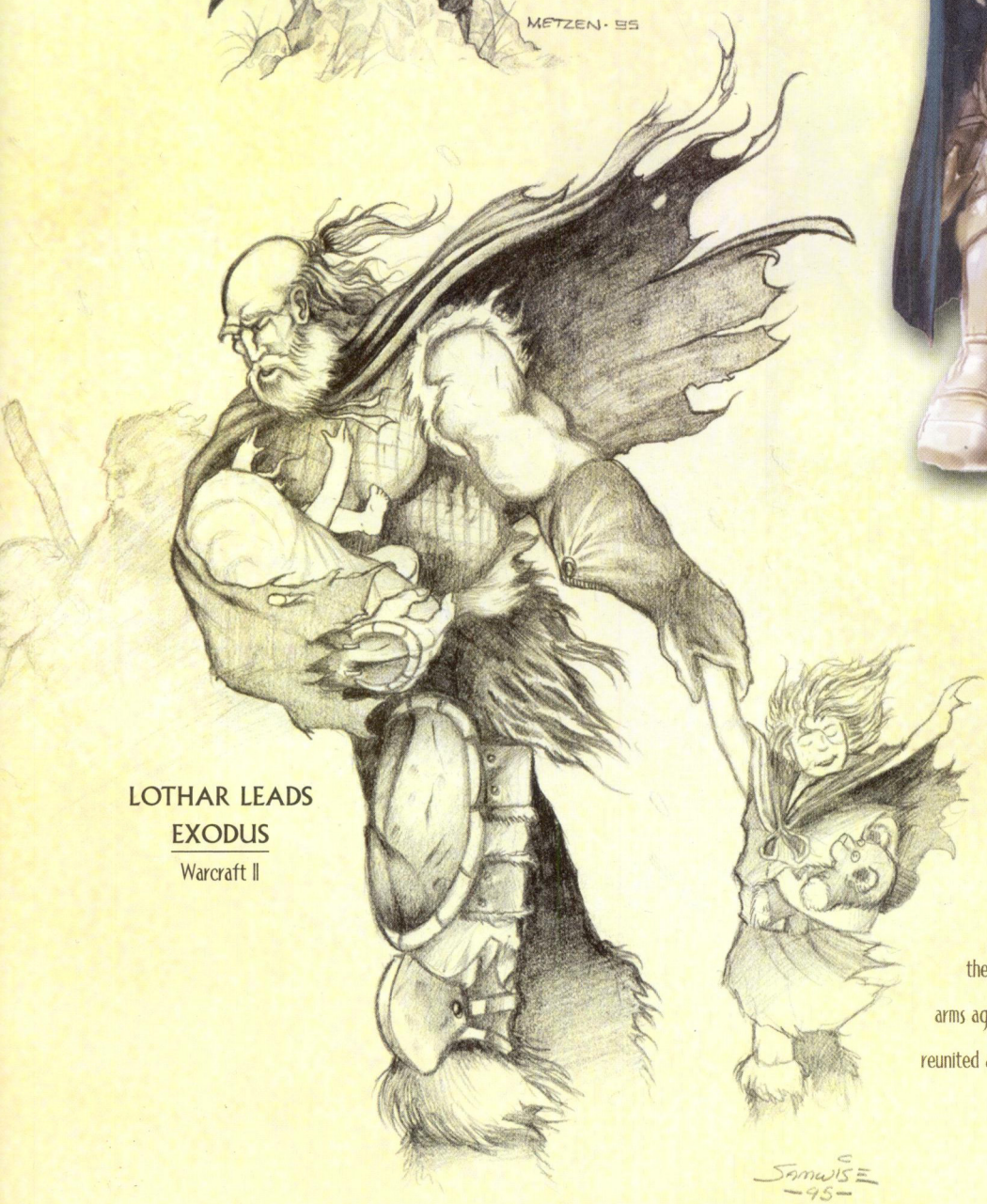


LOTHAR
Warcraft II

"Legend" was the original convention for the term "Hero" currently used in Warcraft III.



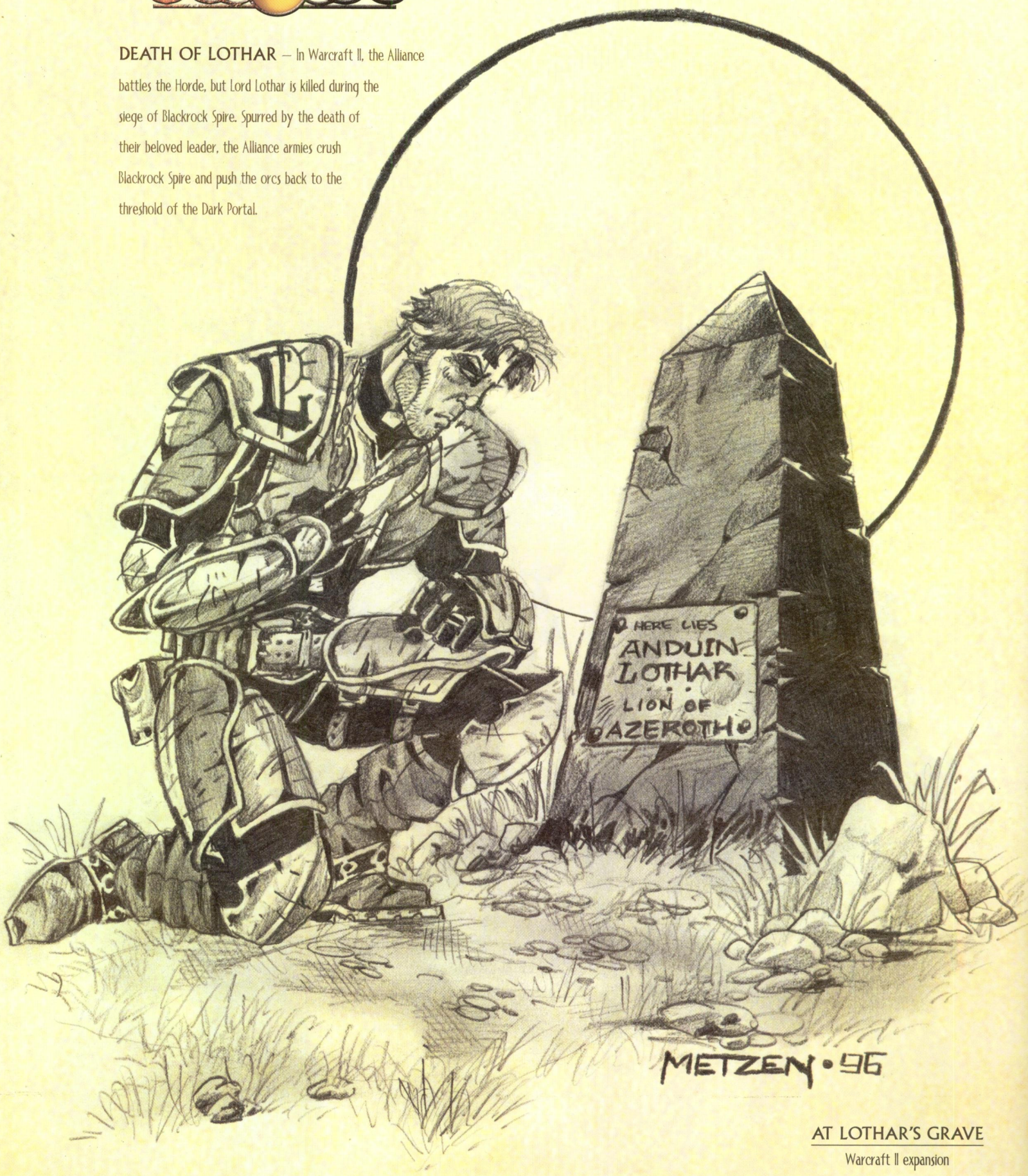
LEGEND
Warcraft III



LOTHAR LEADS EXODUS
Warcraft II

LOTHAR EXODUS – In Warcraft I, Lord Lothar led an exodus of refugees to the northern nation of Lordaeron. Once there, he convinced the leaders of the seven human nations to unite in arms against the Horde. The separate nations of the Arathorian empire were reunited as the Alliance of Lordaeron.

DEATH OF LOTHAR — In Warcraft II, the Alliance battles the Horde, but Lord Lothar is killed during the siege of Blackrock Spire. Spurred by the death of their beloved leader, the Alliance armies crush Blackrock Spire and push the orcs back to the threshold of the Dark Portal.

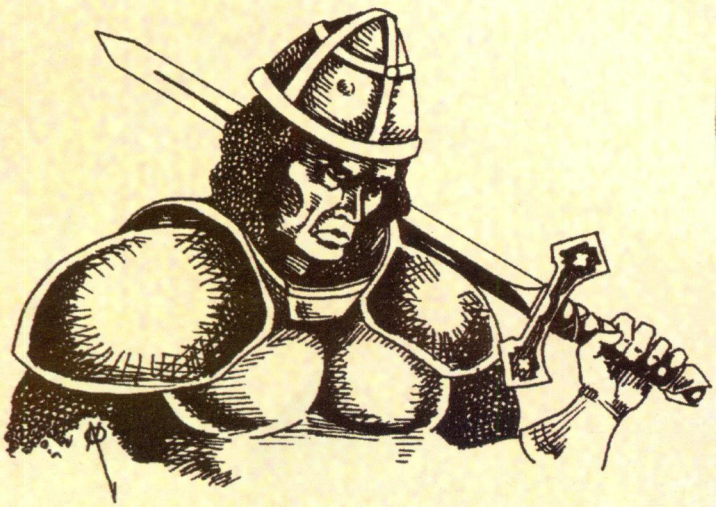


AT LOTHAR'S GRAVE

Warcraft II expansion

FOOTMAN

Warcraft II



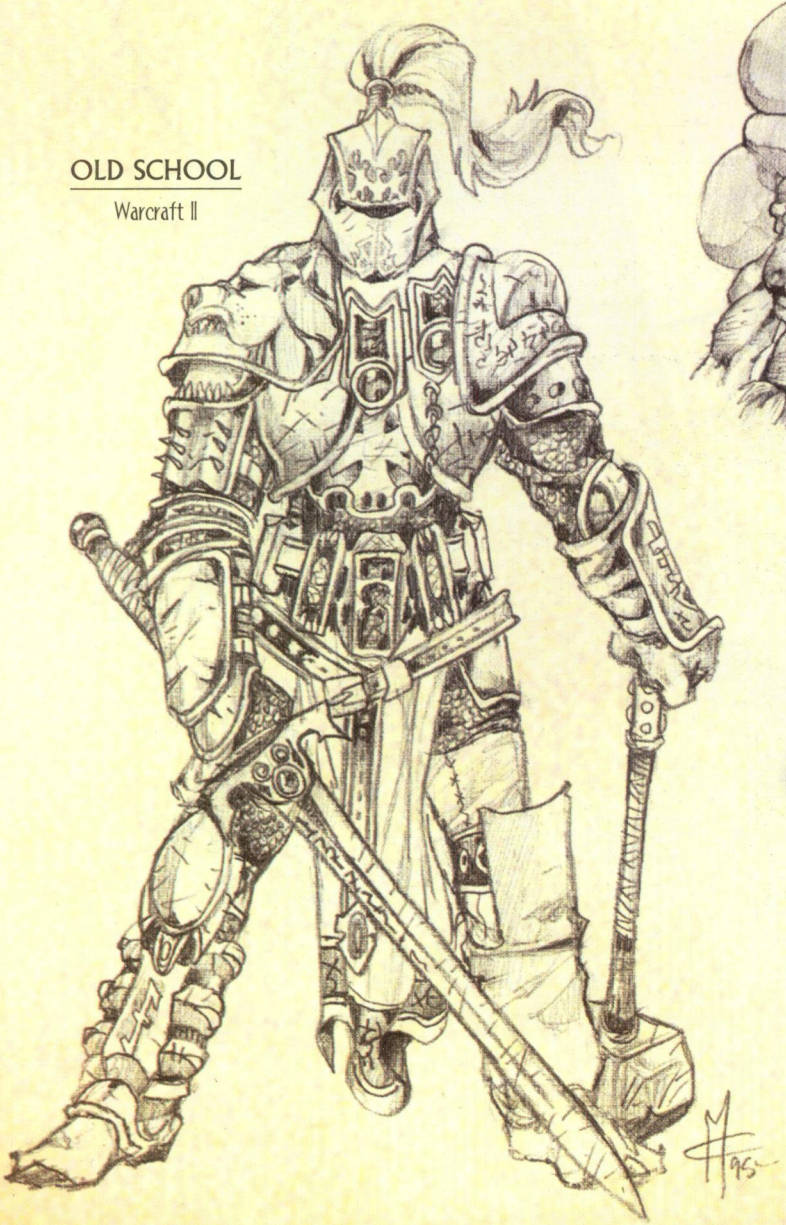
LONE WARRIOR

Warcraft II



OLD SCHOOL

Warcraft II



PALADIN

Warcraft III





MEDIVH
Warcraft III

MEDIVH – The history of the Warcraft universe is long and rich. In the years leading up to the point where Warcraft: Orcs & Humans begins, the Guardian, Aegwynn, defeats Sargeras, the Lord of the Burning Legion in single combat. Sargeras' malevolent spirit bonds with the soul of Aegwynn's unborn child, Medivh, who is destined to become the Last Guardian.

Medivh is eventually driven mad by the spirit of Sargeras and opens the Dark Portal, allowing the orcish Horde to begin its invasion of Azeroth. At the onset of Warcraft II, Medivh is killed by his best friend, Lord Lothar, and his own apprentice, Khadgar.

Medivh now makes a return in Warcraft III to attend to some unfinished business...

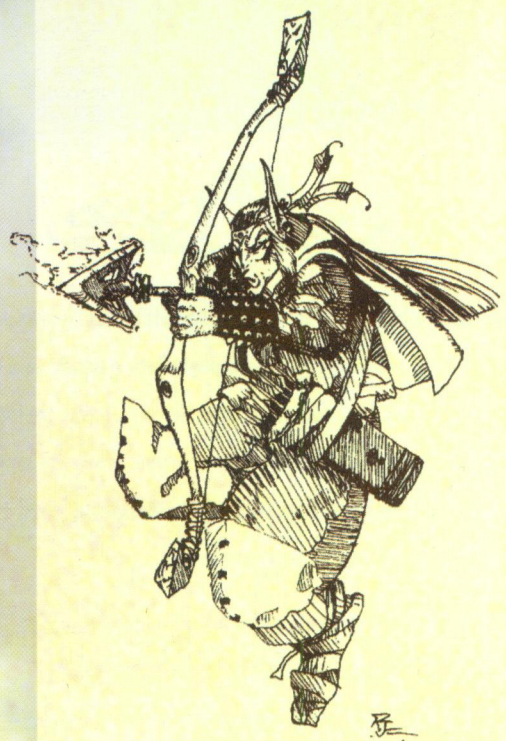
ELVES – Long ago, the high elves, on the verge of losing their continuing war against the trolls, sought the aid of the humans of Arathor. In exchange for their help against the trolls, the high elves agreed to teach men in the ways of magic. The combined army of elves and humans consequently succeeded in wiping out the majority of trolls in Lordaeron.



SORCERESS
Warcraft III



HIGH ELF RANGER
Warcraft III



ELVEN ARCHER
Warcraft III



ARCHMAGE

Warcraft III



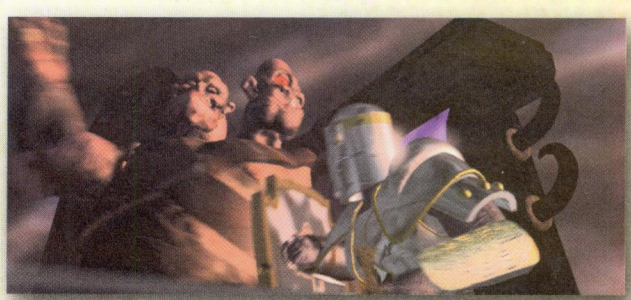
WATER ELEMENTAL

Warcraft III



SOLDIER

Warcraft II Cinematic



SOLDIER IN BATTLE

Warcraft II expansion Cinematic



NO SHORTCUTS TO PERFECTION – "There were several times when we tried to cut a few corners to reduce the amount of work and processing time involved in creating some of the scenes, but we could always tell when we looked at it. Ultimately, we just kept going back and reworking each scene again and again until we had what you see today."

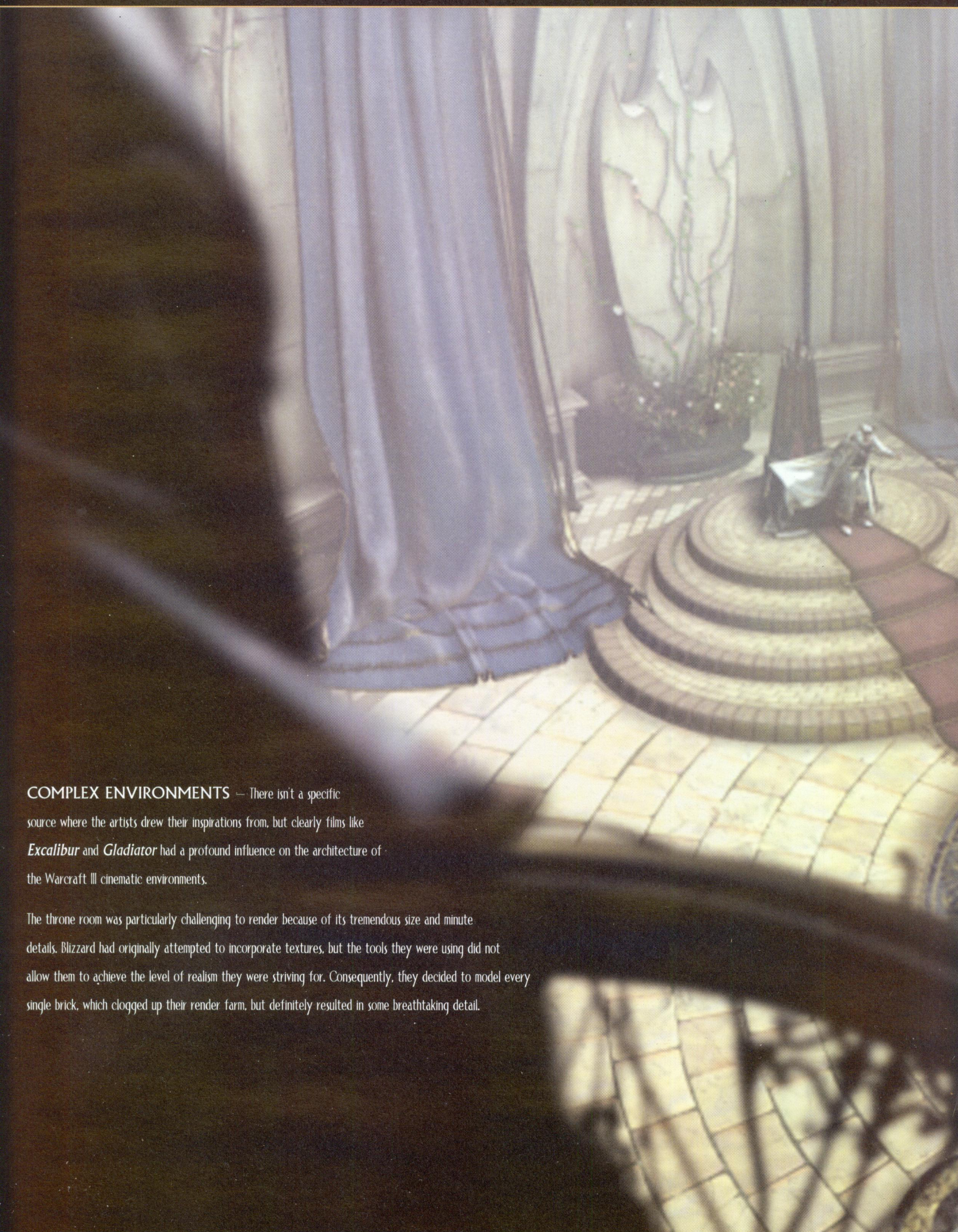
– Nicholas S. Carpenter, Cinematic Director







ACT II: MEDIVH'S WARNING – In this scene, Medivh transforms inside Terenas' throne room to warn the humans of impending danger. He tells them that all of the petty issues they're bickering about will seem like nothing compared to the imminent plague facing them: The Undead Scourge. His words, however, fall upon deaf ears and he is dismissively sent away.



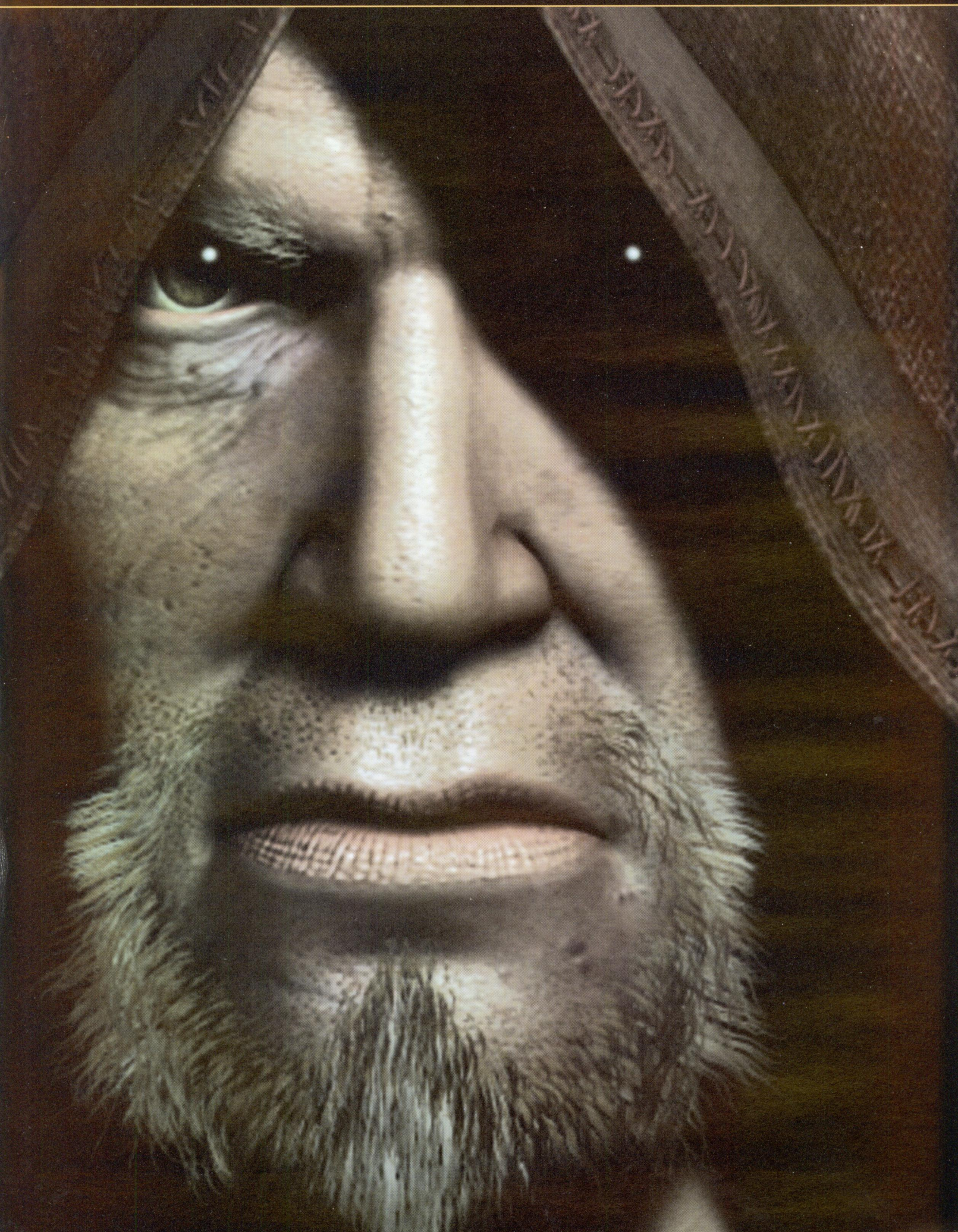
COMPLEX ENVIRONMENTS — There isn't a specific source where the artists drew their inspirations from, but clearly films like *Excalibur* and *Gladiator* had a profound influence on the architecture of the Warcraft III cinematic environments.

The throne room was particularly challenging to render because of its tremendous size and minute details. Blizzard had originally attempted to incorporate textures, but the tools they were using did not allow them to achieve the level of realism they were striving for. Consequently, they decided to model every single brick, which clogged up their render farm, but definitely resulted in some breathtaking detail.





FINE DETAIL – Hair was another huge challenge for the cinematic department. To accomplish the remarkable work seen here in this close-up image of Medivh, Blizzard rendered each individual hair. They were armed with a fair amount of proprietary software to help make this possible. Much of the code involved in creating some of the effects is just not available, so the software had to be developed in-house.





PROFOUND USE OF COLOR – The blues and purples used in the color scheme for this Act create a cold and sickly feel, beautifully underscoring the moment when the humans choose to alienate themselves from the real issues before them.









ORCS

The Horde

When bad guys look in the mirror, do they see bad guys?

This was a central question for Blizzard's artists to answer when confronted with the task of bringing Warcraft's orcs to life. There's no question of what the orcs are: monsters, intent on destroying humanity. The conjurer Medivh's lust for power led him to open the Dark Portal. And the giant, green, axe-wielding orcs now swarming into Azeroth have only one thing on their minds—war.

But if the storyline posits them as monsters, in the game, and under the player's control, the orcs become far less menacing without being completely defanged. Blizzard's artists bring the orcs to life in all their primitive, blood-lusting, war-loving glory, while infusing them with healthy chunks of humor.

The cinematics play it straight, reveling in the orcs' size and dark, violent way of life. But as game units, the orcs are made much more "loveable"—at least as loveable as giant, green, killing machines can be. Much of the appeal of the orcs is accomplished by the often hilarious voice work, which is also true for many other units in the game. But the nature of the art direction for the orcs—heavy on exaggerated features and primary colors—provides a light tone to an extremely dark subject matter.

The secret (or maybe not-so-secret) truth is that more players enjoy playing the bloodthirsty orcs than the pious humans. Credit the imagination and talent of Blizzard's artists, who found a way to make playing evil a whole lot of fun.

CONCEPT ART

ORCS

ORC WEAPONS

Warcraft III



PEON

Warcraft II





OLD PEON

Warcraft: Orcs & Humans

BORN TO FIGHT– Most of orcish society is bent on warfare. It is clear when you look at the art that even the lowly peons, although not as mighty as some of the other orcs shown here, are built to be engines of destruction. Their culture, which up to this point has been programmed solely for war, is just now attempting to find a new way to live under the leadership of Thrall. This effort proves to be difficult, though, as it is not easy to turn away from their savage nature.



ORCISH MARINE
Warcraft II

ORC
Warcraft III



ORC SAILOR
Warcraft II

GRUNT
Warcraft II



THRALL

Warcraft III



THRALL CREEPING

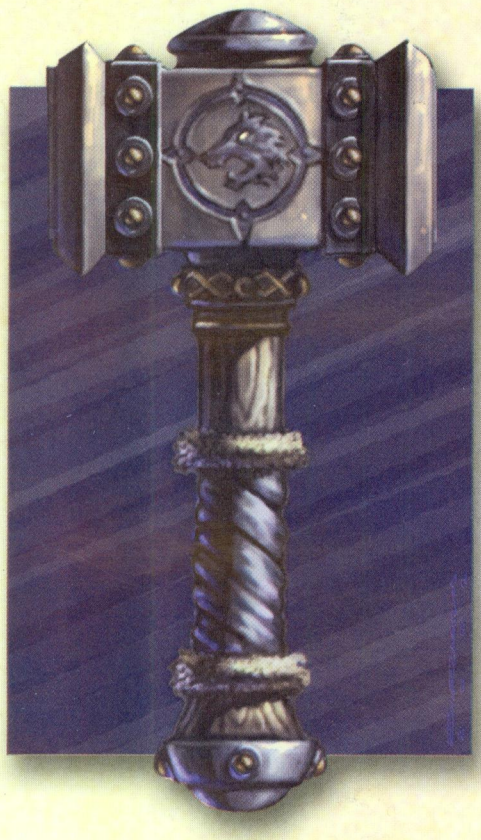
Warcraft Adventures

THRALL – Having been raised by humans, Thrall was not brought up with the same corruption and bloodlust prevalent in the orc race. He was, instead, trained to use his wits more than his might. An education in history and strategy developed him into a quick thinker who could overcome foes using more esoteric means.

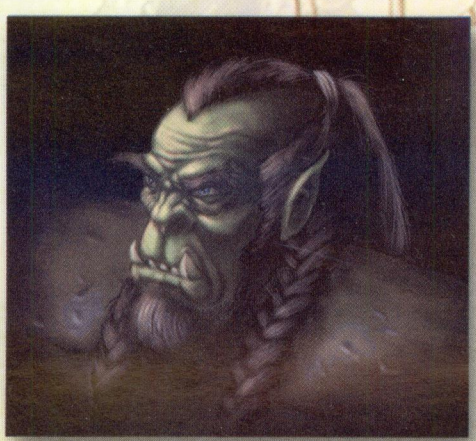
The original designs for this character in Warcraft Adventures depicted him with a much slighter build, dressed in slave's rags. Blizzard wanted people to identify with Thrall as the bridge between the orcish race and humans. Other details, such as his blue eyes and more articulate speech patterns, were intentionally added to further enhance his human-like characteristics.



THRALL
Warcraft III

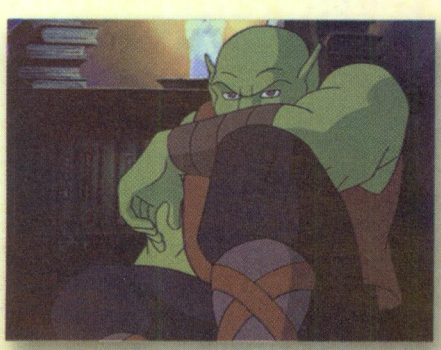


THE DOOMHAMMER
Warcraft III

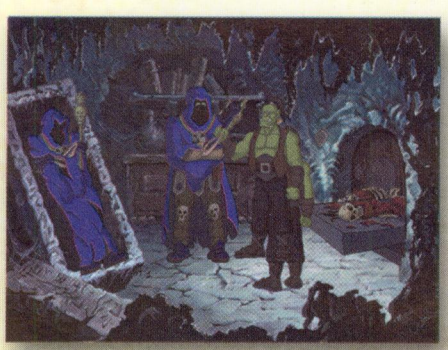


THRALL FACE
Warcraft III

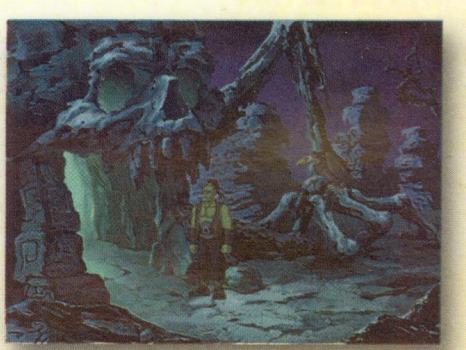
In Warcraft III, Thrall still has these qualities, but now boasts a much more robust physical demeanor. No longer a slight creature wearing rags, his massive frame now dons the black armor of his mentor, Doomhammer—indeed, he even wields the Doomhammer itself. In the minds of the Blizzard artists, Thrall's ascension to power as the Horde's new Warchief deemed it necessary for him to now possess the physical mantle of that station.



BROODING THRALL
Warcraft Adventures



THRALL & DEATH KNIGHT
Warcraft Adventures



THRALL TEMPLE
Warcraft Adventures



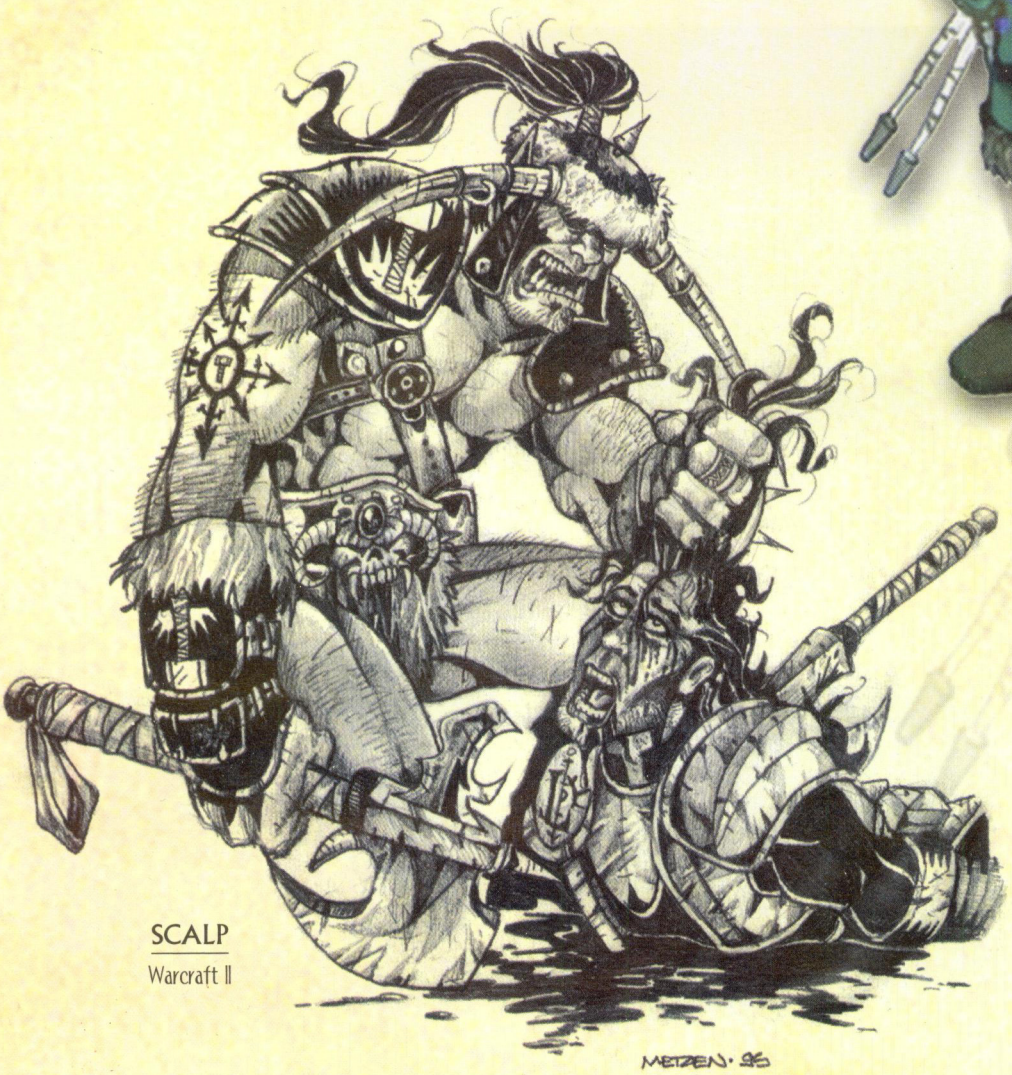
JUNGLE TROLL

Warcraft III



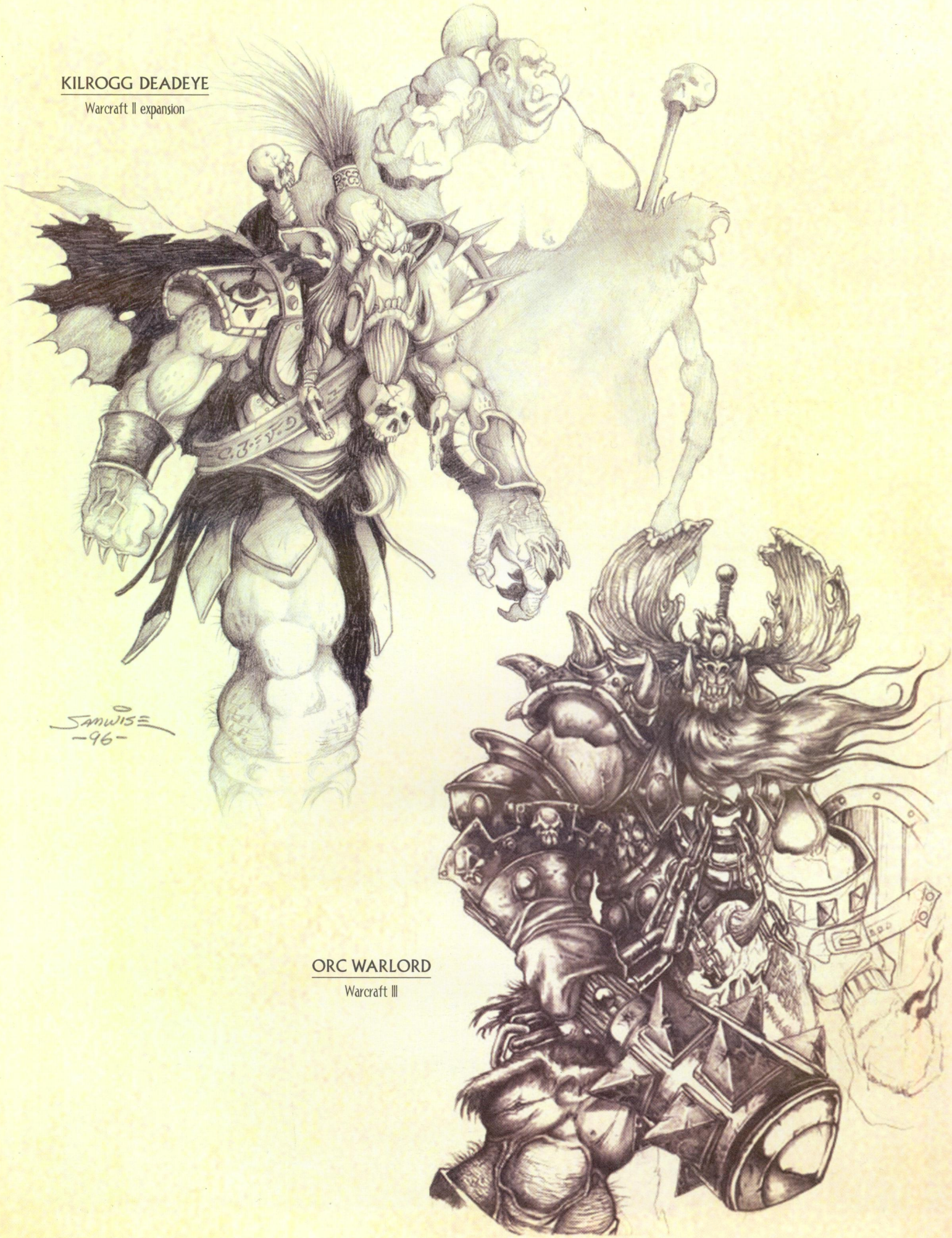
ORC HUNTER

Warcraft III



SCALP

Warcraft II



KILROGG DEADEYE

Warcraft II expansion

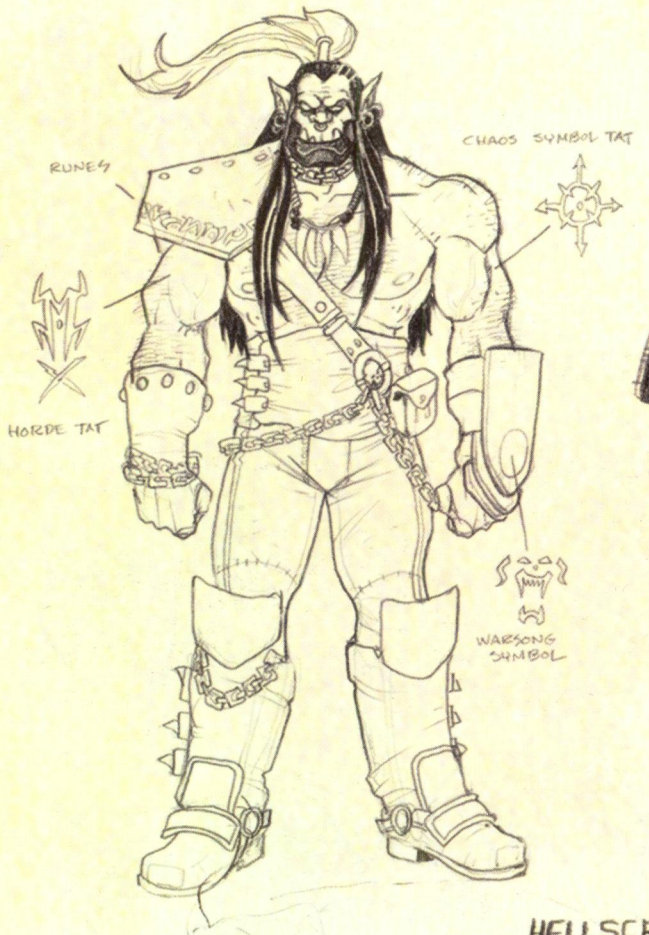
ORC WARLORD

Warcraft III



GROM HELLSCREAM

Warcraft III



HELLSCREAM
Warcraft III

HELLSCREAM
Warcraft II expansion





THE DEATH OF HELLSCREAM

HELLSCREAM AND THE DEMON CURSE – Grom Hellscream was one of the first orc warlords to fall to the demons' corruption by drinking the blood of Mannoroth. This act resulted in a curse that drove the Horde toward an uncontrollable need to ravage everything around them. Hellscream's already brutal nature made him the perfect vessel to absorb this violent mandate. Although undoubtedly a fierce warrior, he was also, however, at base a very noble orc who was forever loyal to his clan. This sense of honor eventually emerges in his final years. After a lifetime of slaughtering his enemies, he seeks redemption for himself and his people from the demon curse by delivering the fatal blow to Mannoroth. Although this act of courage successfully releases the Horde from its violent demon curse, Hellscream dies in this battle. Thrall's witness to the death of his mentor is a significant moment in the history of Warcraft.

FARSEER

Warcraft III



TAUREN CHIEFTAIN

Warcraft III



ORC FARSEER

FARSEERS – In Warcraft III, Thrall's goal is to reestablish shamanism as the orcs' core religion, casting away the demon-corrupt warlock thinking that had previously driven their race. To accomplish this, he calls upon the ancient orc shaman elders to come out of hiding and return to the fold. Their wisdom and experience is essential to lead the Horde into this new era.

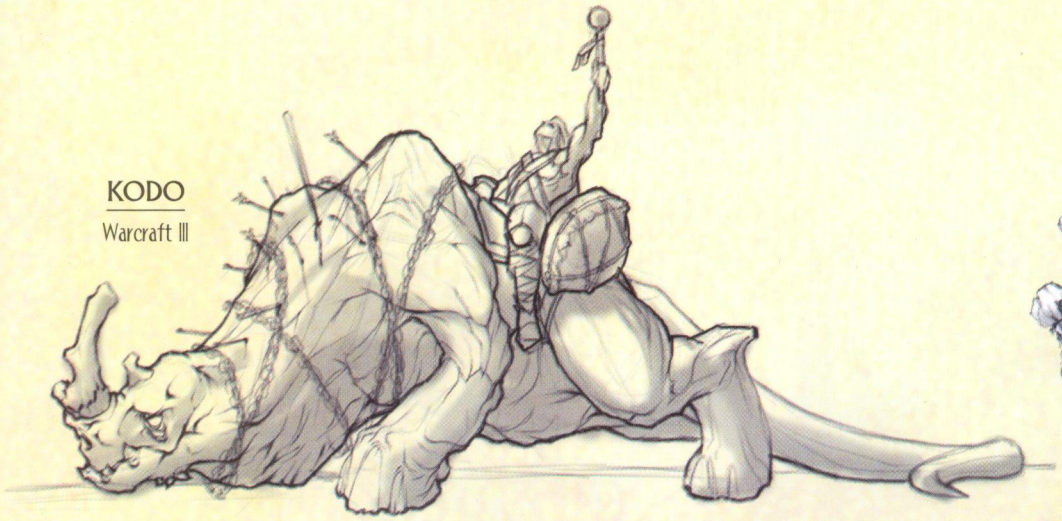
Farseers are the most experienced shamans. They not only possess the highest levels of intelligence, but also further supplement their great leadership skills with their clairvoyance. This ability enables them to witness future events and even view distant worlds. The farseers serve as Thrall's cabinet, able to not only guide the Horde with wisdom, but also serve in a valuable strategic capacity by anticipating enemy movements.

TAUREN CHIEFTAINS – Like all tauren creatures, the chieftains are not only massive and strong, but also noble and loyal. Much like the farseers, they not only serve as the war leaders, but also as spiritual guides to their people.

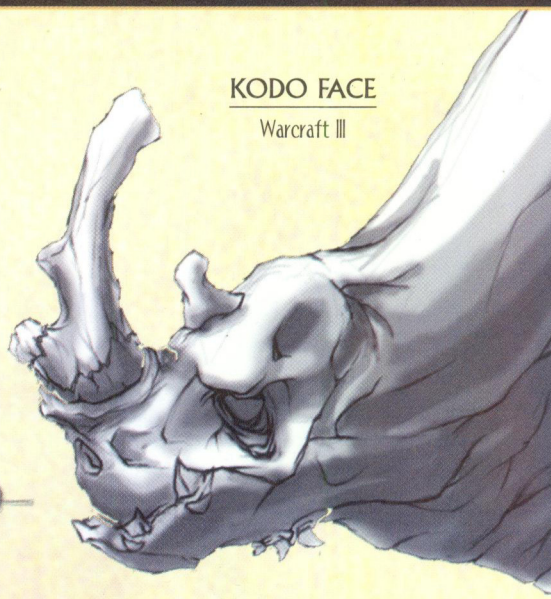


BLADEMASTER

Warcraft III



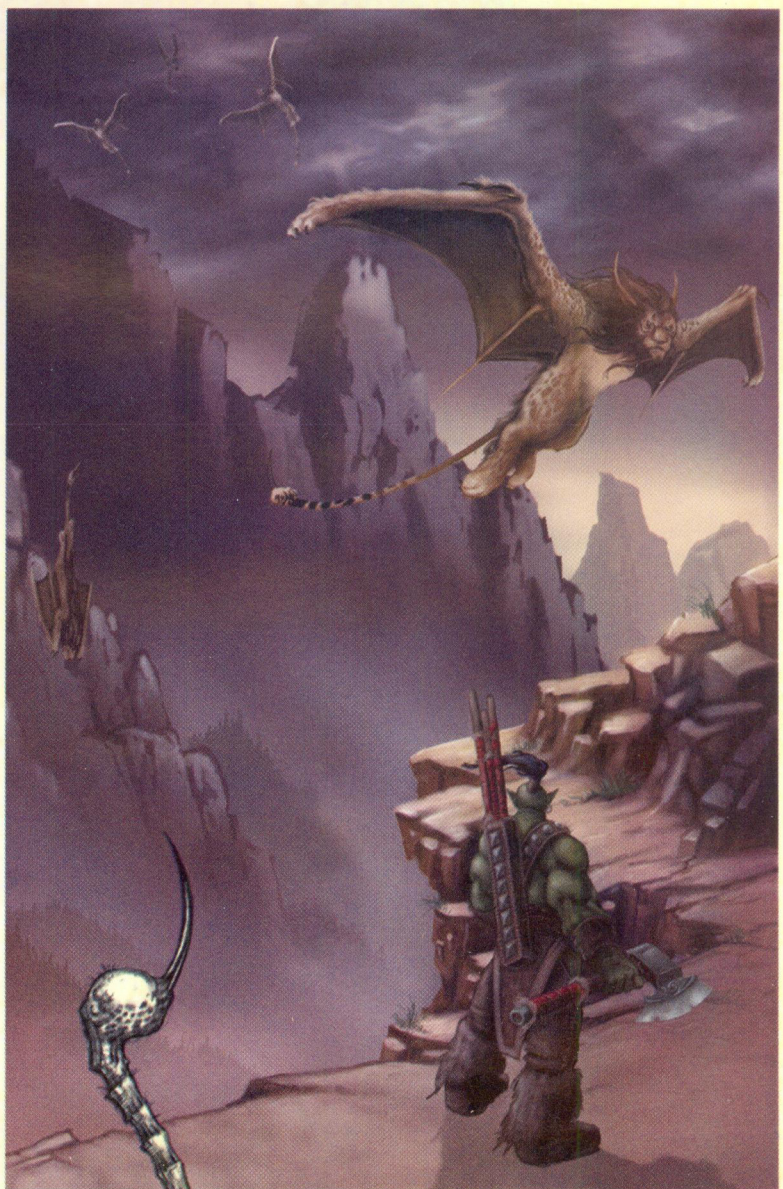
KODO
Warcraft III

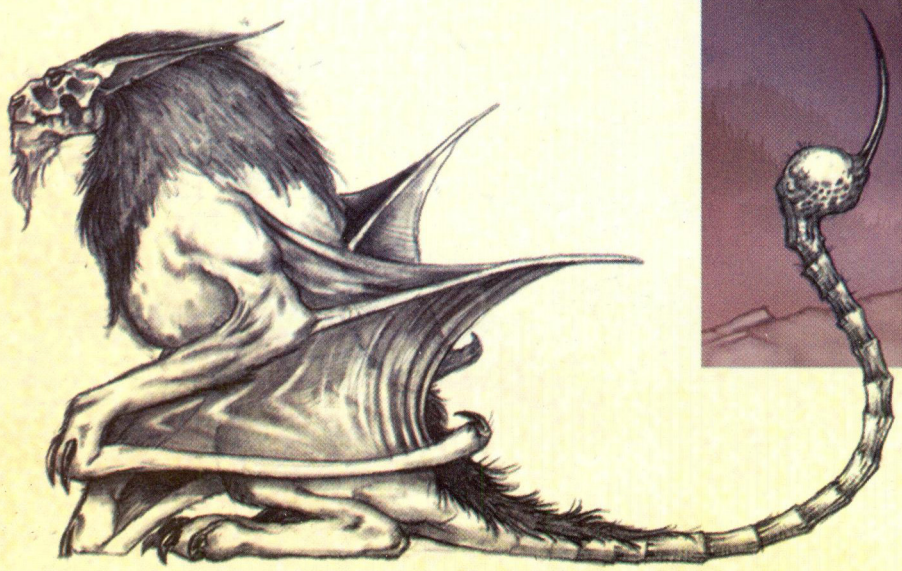


KODO FACE
Warcraft III

THE CREATURES OF THE KALIMDOR BARRENS – The desolate Barrens region of central Kalimdor is home to many creatures, including kodos and wyvern. The kodos are herd animals of a reptilian and bison mix that graze across these lands. This massive creature has no predators, other than the occasional tauren hunt. This, however, is a rare and sacred event, as the tauren regulate the kodo numbers in a very organic way. Although not aggressive by nature, kodos can be trained for battle. In Warcraft III, the orcs charge these beasts with carrying the battle drums.

In traditional fantasy material, wyvern are typically seen as the cousins to dragons with a scorpion's tail and reptile features. Blizzard sought to put their own spin on this creature by giving it more mammal qualities. The incorporation of lion characteristics to the Warcraft III wyverns underscores their noble and proud nature. These are not simply horrible monsters bent on evil, but rather sentient beings who not only help defend the orcs, but also complement their desire to seek a higher path throughout the scope of the conflict.



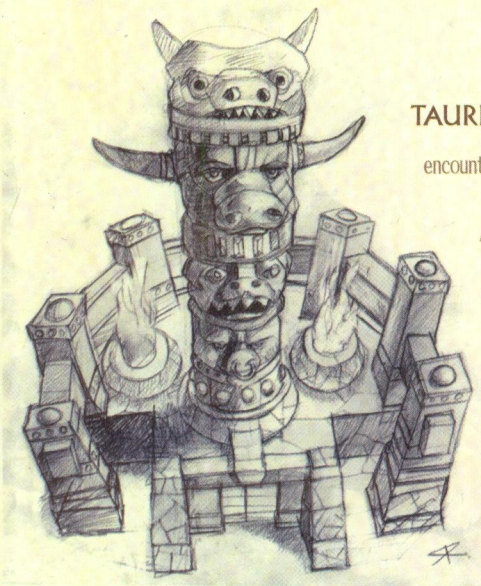


WYVERN
Warcraft III

TOTEM

Warcraft III

TAUREN TOTEM



TAUREN - These ordinarily benevolent creatures can quickly turn from gentle giants into ferocious beasts when challenged. The orcs originally encounter the tauren in the Barrens of their native land, Kalimdor.

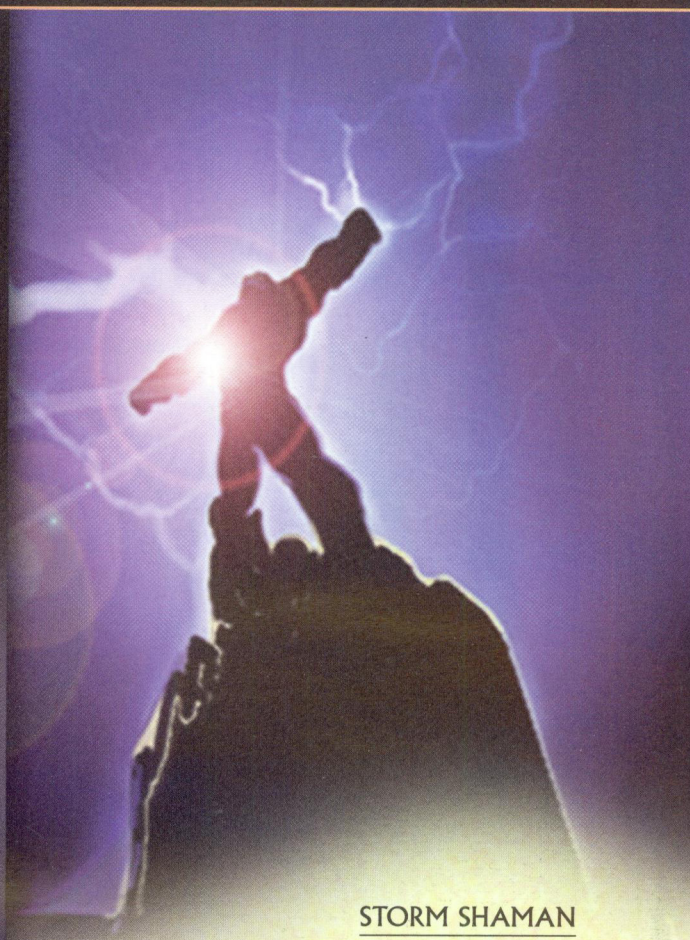
An interesting symbiotic relationship now exists between these two races. The tauren essentially represent what the orcs used to be before the corruption of the demon curse. By aligning themselves with the tauren, the orcs enjoy the benefit of receiving guidance from this noble and honorable race. The tauren are interested in restoring order to the chaos-torn Horde, but also gain the strength of the orcs as protection against their own numerous enemies.

TAUREN

Warcraft III







STORM SHAMAN
Warcraft III

WITCH DOCTOR
Warcraft III



ORC SHAMANS AND ELEMENTAL MAGIC – Orc shamans commune with the spirits of the elements. These forces are innately chaotic, but the shamans have the ability to calm them and focus their elemental powers in directed ways, usually against their enemies, channeling lightning, causing earthquakes, and even summoning primordial fires from the ground. It's important to note that this is all done in a very organic way that involves appeasing the spirits rather than commanding them, thereby clearly distinguishing it from demonic magic.

TROLL MAGIC – In stark contrast, the trolls have a much less pure approach to magical usage. Their religion is a mix of voodoo, dark spiritualism, and blood magic. Although it is not specifically a demonic or warlock power, it definitely taps its resources from the darker end of the spectrum. Thrall is, understandably, uneasy with the trolls' impure leanings, but is essentially obliged to tolerate it in the interest of maintaining the forces necessary to achieve his greater goals.



TROLL SHADOW HUNTER

Warcraft III

NER'ZHUL

Warcraft IIx



NER'ZHUL – It's important for those true to the Warcraft storyline to know that the orc sitting on this throne, Ner'zhul, is the one who becomes the undead Lich King. As the story goes, shortly following the second war, Ner'zhul commanded the orcs still left on the world of Draenor. He was an ancient shaman and one of the first orcs to ever commune with the demons. Significantly, although Hellscream was the first to taste the demon blood, it was Ner'zhul and his dealings with the Burning Legion that set this sequence of events in motion.

Hence, Ner'zuhl is ultimately responsible for the orcs plight relative to demons. For his sins, he was captured by the demons and transformed into the Lich King. His soul now resides within a crystal cask known as the Frozen Throne, which is buried beneath the arctic continent of Northrend. Although imprisoned, this victim of corruption is quite crafty, and holds secret still a plan for his return to the mortal realm.

DOOMHAMMER

Warcraft II



ORC ROCKERS

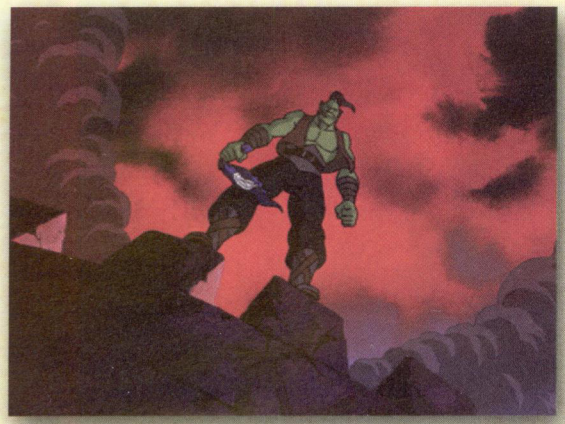
Warcraft II





BIG ORC

Warcraft III





HELLSCREAM

Warcraft Adventures











TROLL

Warcraft Adventures

TEMPLE OF THE DAMNED

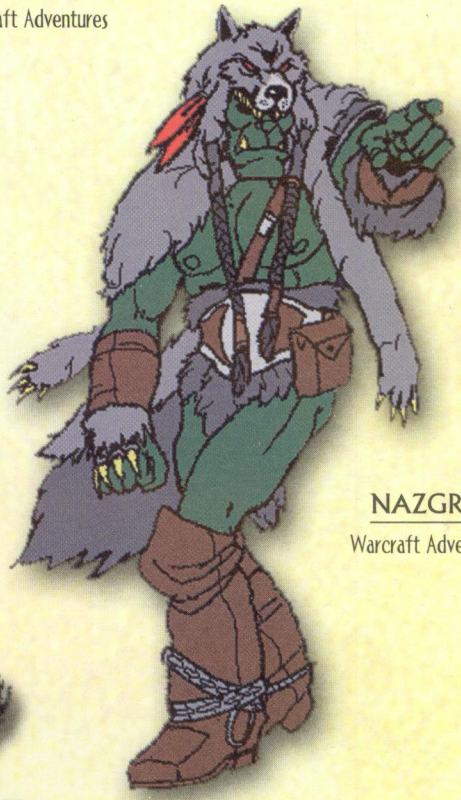
Warcraft Adventures





GAZLOWE

Warcraft Adventures



NAZGREL

Warcraft Adventures



CAMP

Warcraft Adventures



THRALL

Warcraft Adventures



ZUL'JIN

Warcraft Adventures

WARCRAFT ADVENTURES – Warcraft Adventures is known to many as the best adventure game that was never published. The game told the story of Thrall, the young orc who was raised by humans, and his quest to find the destiny of his people.

The art looks so different in this game because it came from so many different sources outside of Blizzard. Ultimately, the game was never published because it did not meet Blizzard's high quality standards. The storyline, however, was too important to disregard. Fortunately, this tale finally found a home with the 2001 publication of the Warcraft novel published by Pocket Books and written by Christie Golden, *Warcraft: Lord of the Clans.*







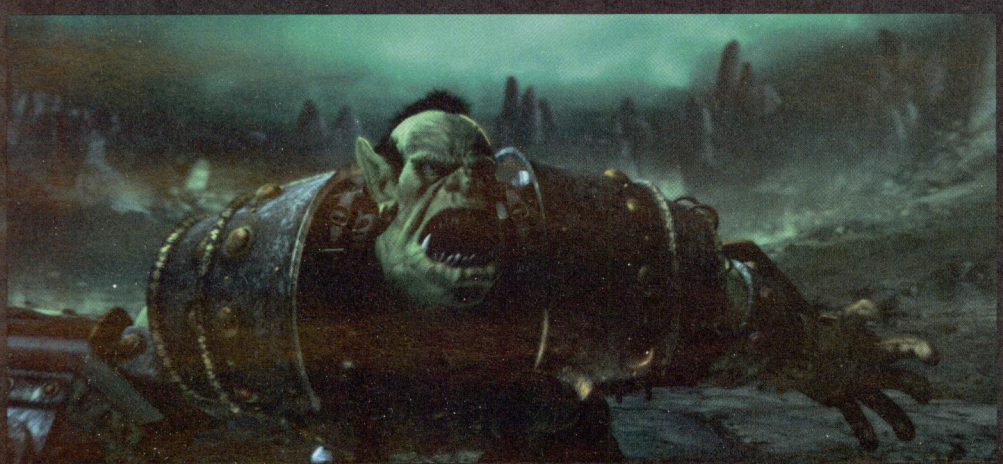


This epic battle scene, like all of the Warcraft III cinematics, began as an animatic or moving storyboard. It's a slideshow of sorts that can be animated, even with stick figures, to simply illustrate how the scene will play out.

It is especially critical that the cinematic artists make sure that there are no mistakes. The shots must work together perfectly. Cutting just a single frame has serious consequences, involving a tremendous amount of time and resources. Each shot receives the undivided attention of an entire team of people for six months—and that doesn't even include the lighting, animating, and rendering of these scenes.















NIGHT ELVES

The Sentinels

After letting the arch-enemies battle it out for two successive games, Blizzard decided to expand the conflict for Warcraft III. History tells us that this epic conflict between humans and orcs was actually preceded 10,000 years earlier by a different war between two different races. And, it's about to start all over again.

Blizzard introduces two ancient races to Warcraft III, giving Azeroth's humans and orcs, and the gamers who play them, a whole new set of challenges. But the biggest challenge was probably faced by Blizzard's artists, whose formidable job was to create two new races, imaginative and different from the orcs and humans, without disrupting or overshadowing the already established universe.

The night elves do this beautifully. A dark, mysterious, ancient race in hiding for thousands of years, the night elves are unlike anything seen in the first two games, yet they fit perfectly into the fantasy world. In striking contrast to the lumbering orcs and scrappy humans, the night elves have an ethereal quality and elegance to them, an otherworldly aura that cannily conveys their age and immortality. Their warriors are also mostly female, something lacking in the first two games.

The night elves have a deep affinity with the natural world and the animal kingdom, a relationship wonderfully conveyed in all the race's units and buildings. Druids can turn trees into living, fighting creatures or morph themselves into bear-like animals or crows. Archers can mount on the backs of the flying hippogryphs to attack from above, while other units command panthers and tigers as riding beasts. Two of the game's most bizarre looking units, the dryads and Keepers of the Grove, are themselves half-animals, with a centaur-like appearance and gait. Most night elf "buildings" are actually living creatures, too—giant trees called ancients that can uproot and move at your command.

It's a wild-looking race, and if it seems somehow less brawny than the orcs, for example, don't let the night elves themselves hear you say that. This race of mostly female warriors is strong and empowered and can defeat you handily. And once you warm up to them and experience first-hand the joy of turning your enemy's forest into killer trees, you'll never doubt their appeal again.

CONCEPT ART

NIGHT ELVES

At Blizzard, the effort has always been to make the races very Tolkienesque, very basic and true to the tenants of the fantasy realm. With the introduction of new races in Warcraft III, Blizzard wanted to ensure that a wide audience could connect with these creatures in the Warcraft universe.

The night elves are Blizzard's spin on the classically evil race, the dark elves. In the D&D realm, the dark elves are traditionally very tough—they have dark skin, white hair, and live underground. Blizzard worked with this archetype to turn it around into a 'good' race that lives above ground and works with the natural elements of the world to achieve their ends. The night elves are a race of healthy, elemental, natural creatures that stand (on average) seven feet tall. Their violet-hued skin, and auburn, green-blue hair complement each other beautifully.





PRIESTESS OF THE MOON

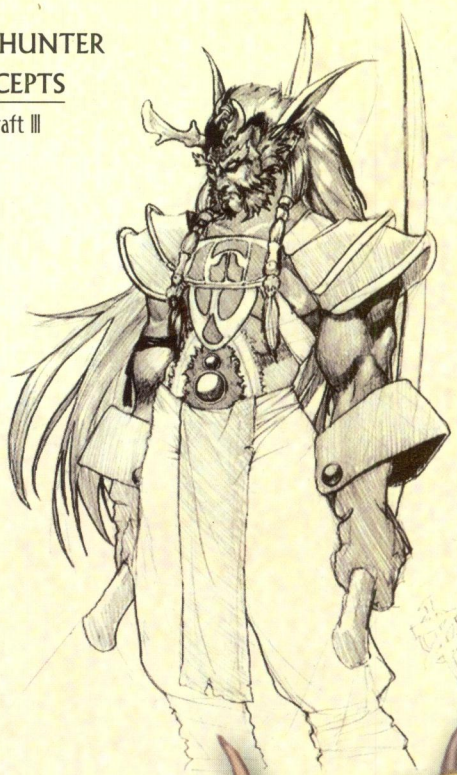
Warcraft III

All night elves worship the Priestess of the Moon, who leads the Sentinel army.



DEMON HUNTER CONCEPTS

Warcraft III



FURION STORMRAGE

Warcraft III





Furion Stormrage, leader of the night elves, once again faces his demonic nemesis, Archemonde, in Warcraft III



TREANT
Warcraft III



KEEPER
Warcraft III

KEEPER OF THE GROVE – The Keeper of the Grove's powers over nature enable him to summon treants (creatures that are created out of the vast forests of the land). He can also use powerful roots to immobilize the enemy and even use the healing properties of the forest's rains to cleanse the wounds of nearby night elves.



OWL BEAR

Warcraft III

NIGHT ELVES AND NATURE - The night elves are so in touch with nature that they will live forever unless killed, indeed, they are in perfect harmony with nature. In Blizzard's own words: "The night elves were the most fun race to create in Warcraft III."



TREANT & FRIEND

Warcraft III



SNOWSCAPE

Warcraft III

DRUID OF THE CLAW

Warcraft III



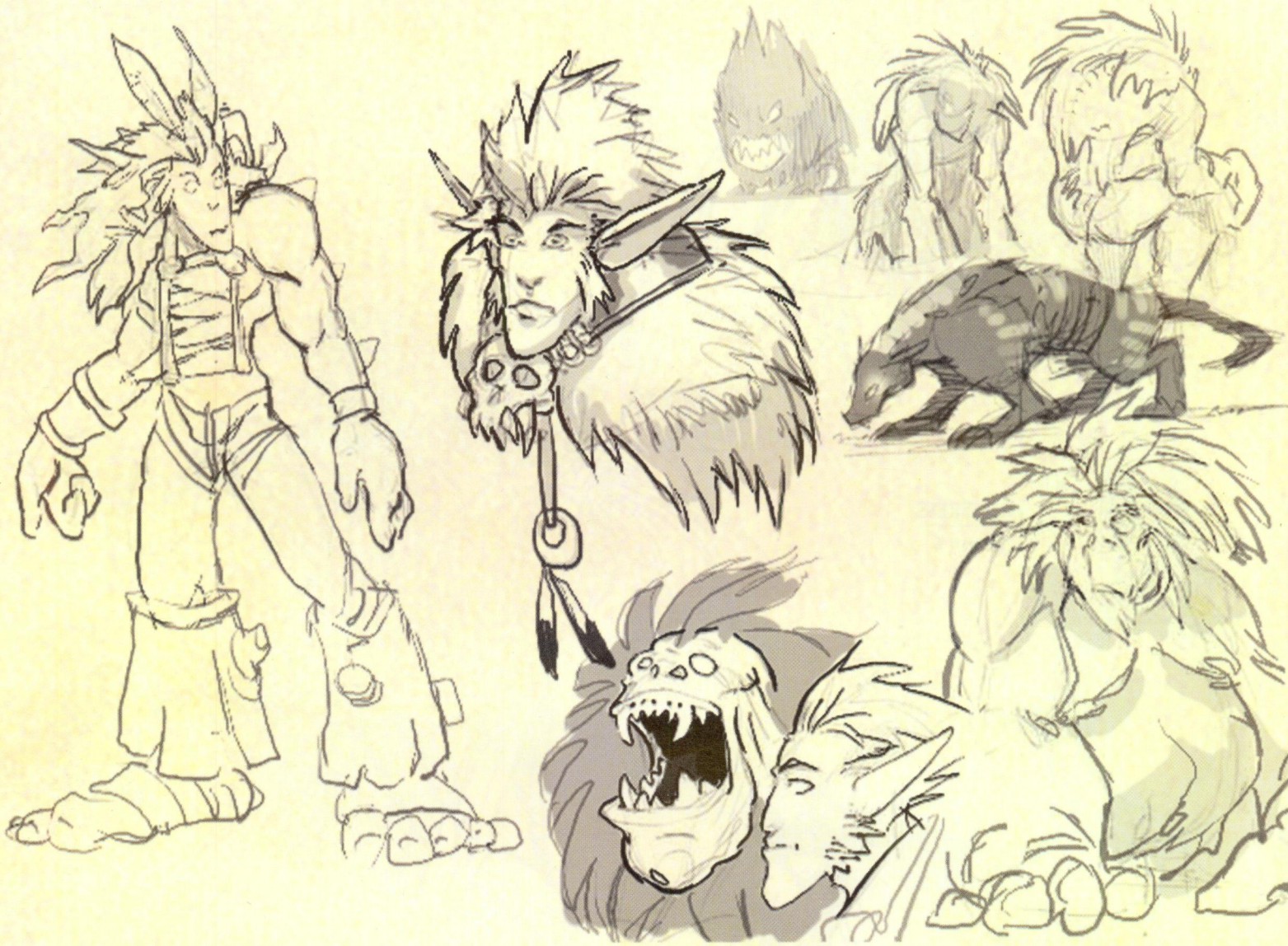


HUNTRESS

Warcraft III

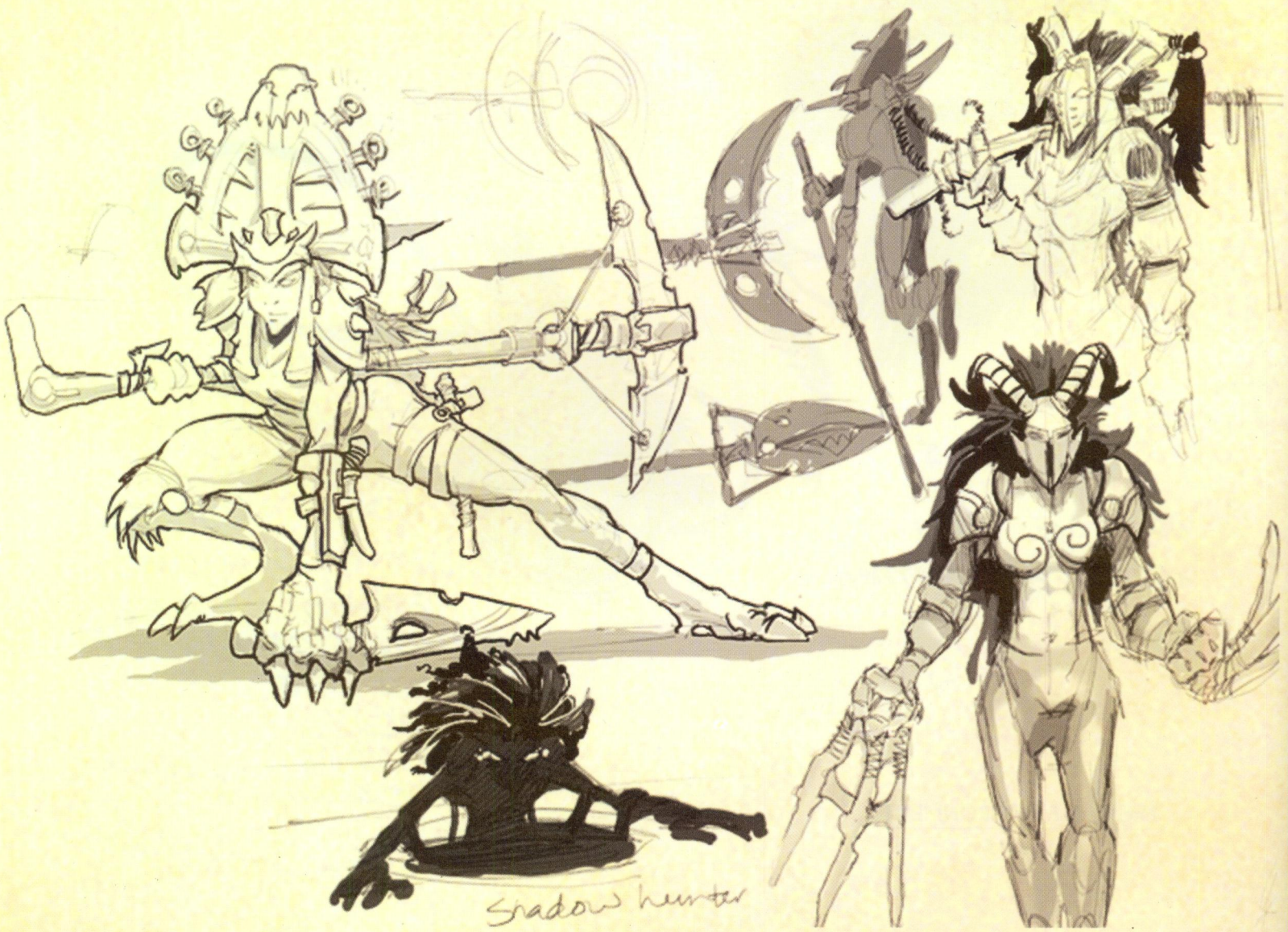
DRUID CONCEPT

Warcraft III



DRUID MEN – In the realm of the night elves, the men are the druids, the keepers of the knowledge and lore. Their souls are naturally entwined with the fabled World Tree, whose roots burrow deep into the earth and all of its stories. It is through this ancient totem that they achieve a wholeness with the historical lineage of their people and, indeed, of all time. Perhaps most significantly, this is also the precious resource from which they tap their great powers.

WARRIOR WOMEN – The night elves are moon worshipers, and the females can blend into the cover of night and become invisible when not in motion, effectively becoming one with the darkness. The women of this race are the warriors, the protectors of the night elf civilization. In fact, there are stories that one must not venture into the darkened forests for fear that the spectral women warriors of the night elves will rip them to pieces before they even know they are in danger.





NIGHT ELF ENVIRONMENT

Warcraft III


EACH child IS required to take A "RITE OF PASSAGE" TO FIND HIS SPIRIT ANIMAL.
MALE KALDOREI ARE SECRETIVE AND RARELY SPEAK. AT TRIBAL MEETINGS, THEY TELEPATHICLY SPEAK THROUGH ONE OF THEIR MANY FEMALE UNDER THEIR CARE.
THE FAVORED WEAPON OF THE KALDOREI.
THE KALDOREI HAVE BUILT GIANT KEEPS DEEP INTO THE MOUNTAINS AND FORESTS OF

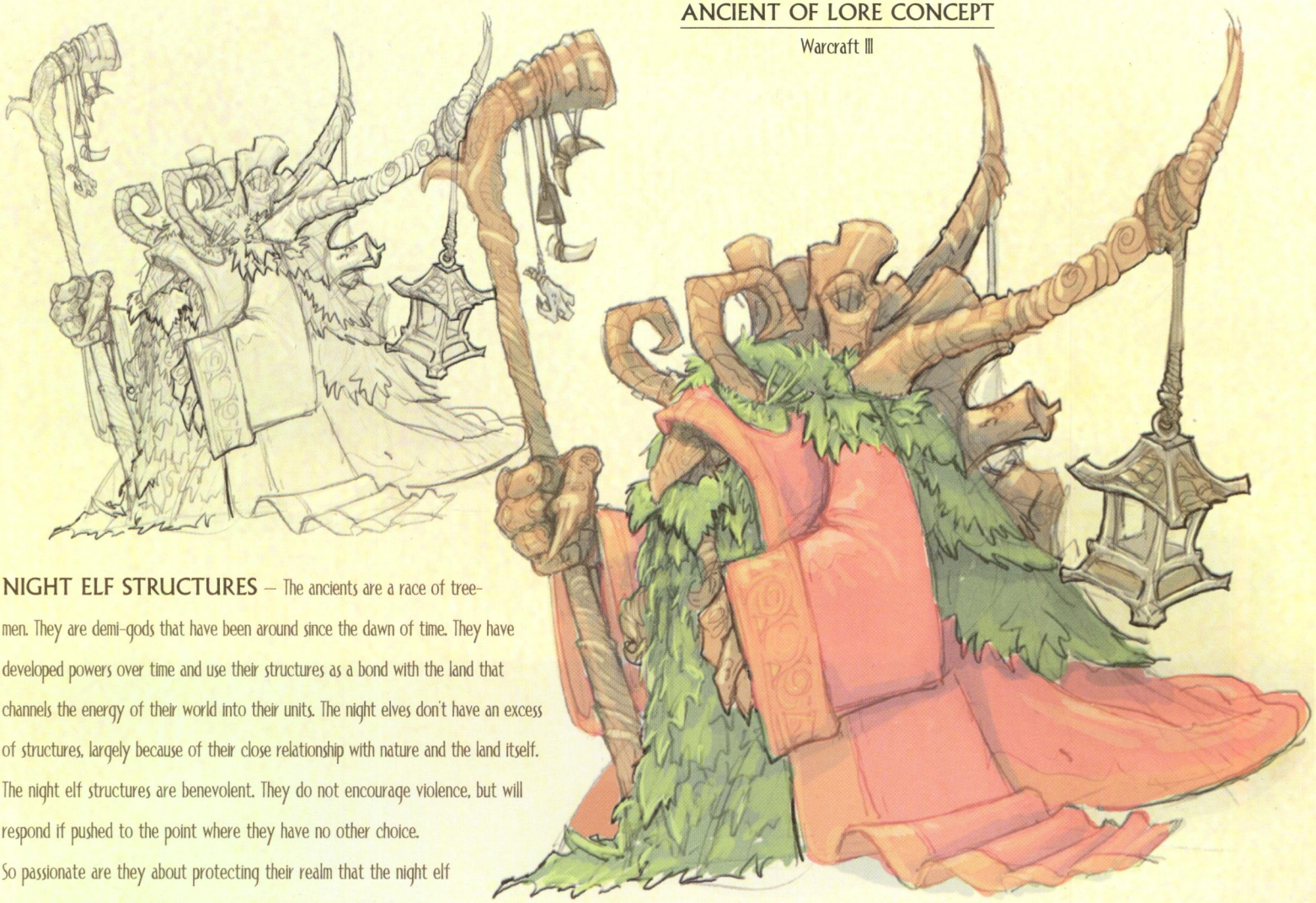


TREE DWELLING CONCEPTS

Warcraft III

ANCIENT OF LORE CONCEPT

Warcraft III



NIGHT ELF STRUCTURES – The ancients are a race of tree-men. They are demi-gods that have been around since the dawn of time. They have developed powers over time and use their structures as a bond with the land that channels the energy of their world into their units. The night elves don't have an excess of structures, largely because of their close relationship with nature and the land itself. The night elf structures are benevolent. They do not encourage violence, but will respond if pushed to the point where they have no other choice.

So passionate are they about protecting their realm that the night elf structures will literally lift their roots out of the ground and fight to protect their beloved race.



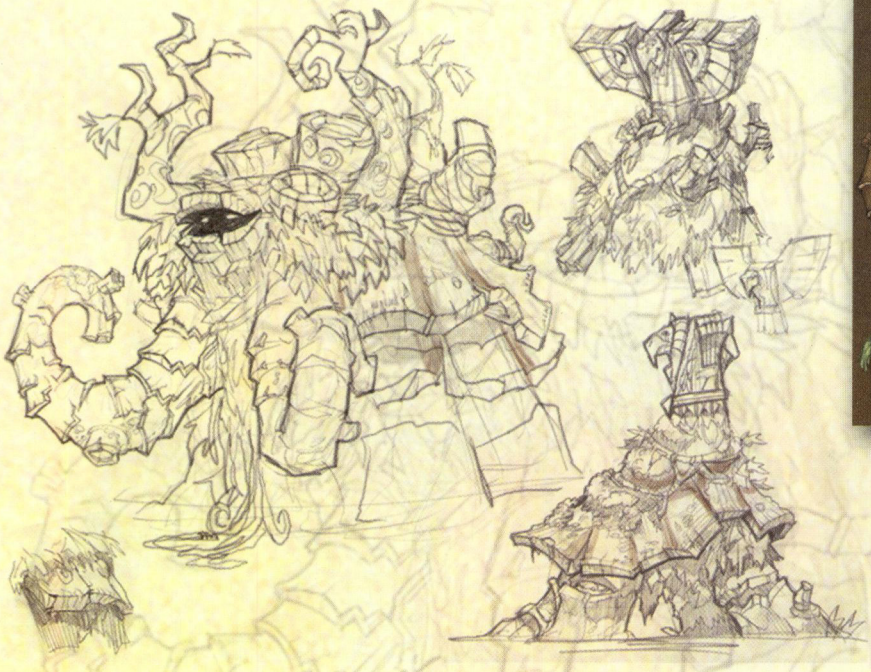
ANCIENT OF LORE

Warcraft III



ANCIENT OF MAGIC

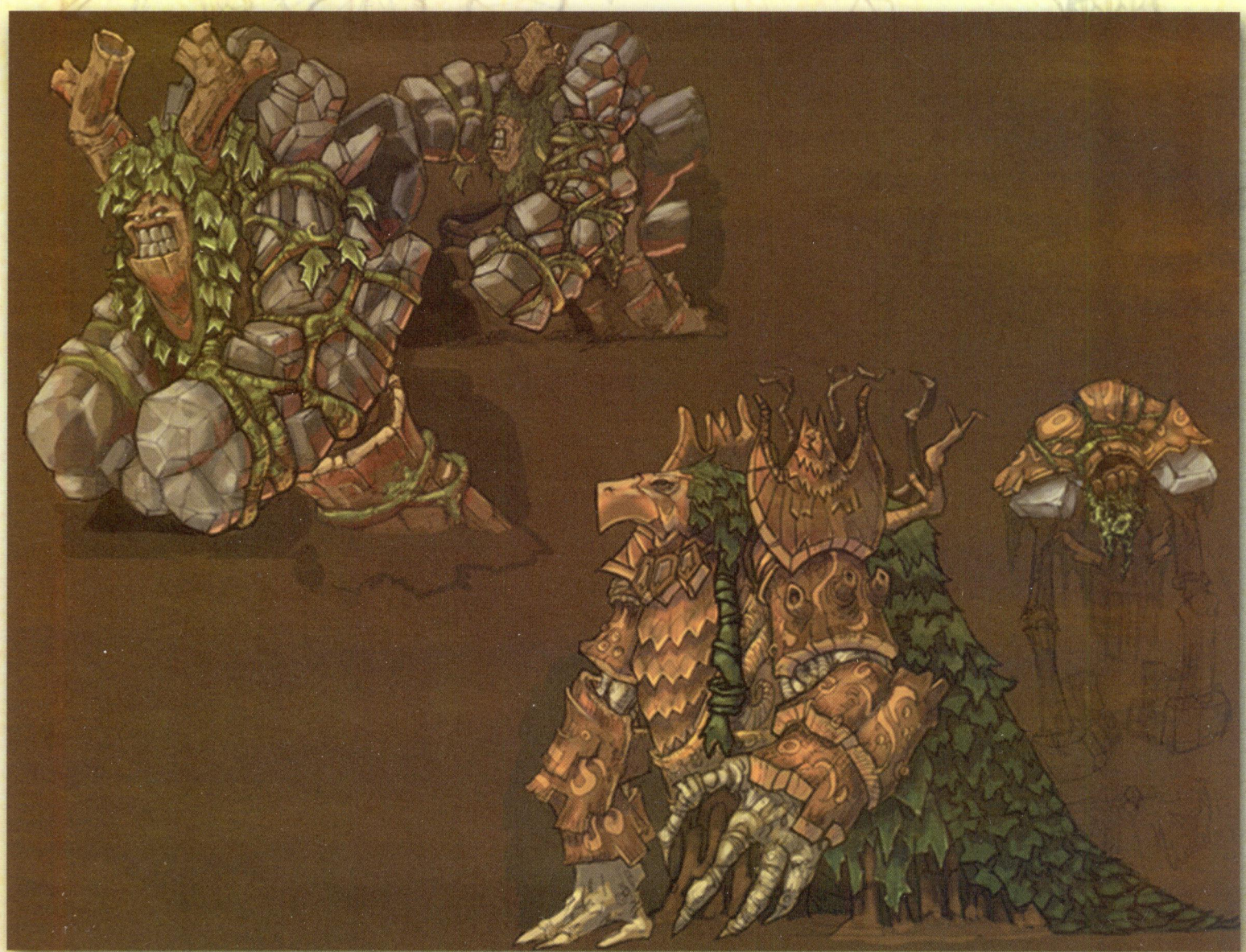
Warcraft III





TREE BUILDING CONCEPTS

Warcraft III

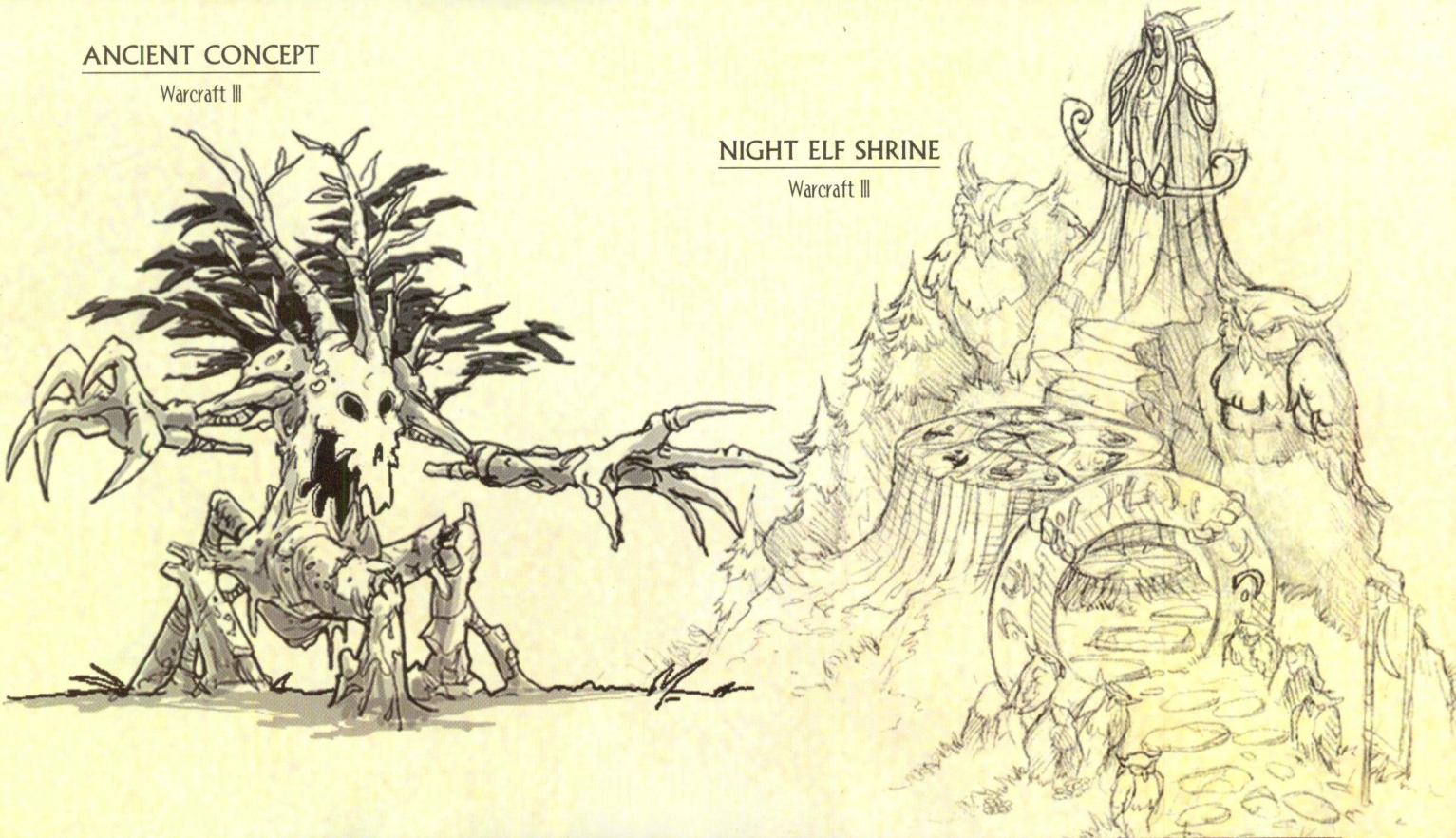


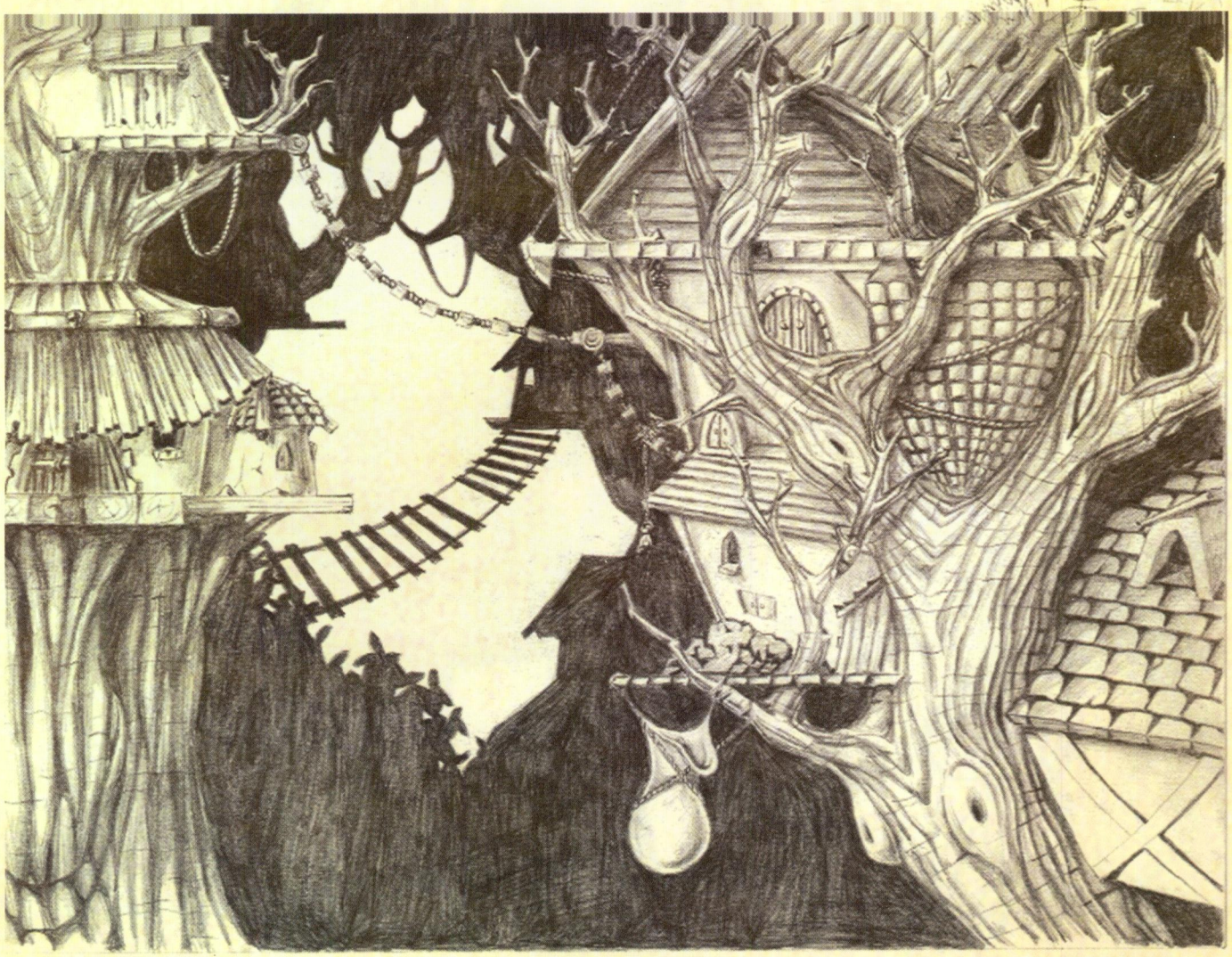
ANCIENT CONCEPT

Warcraft III

NIGHT ELF SHRINE

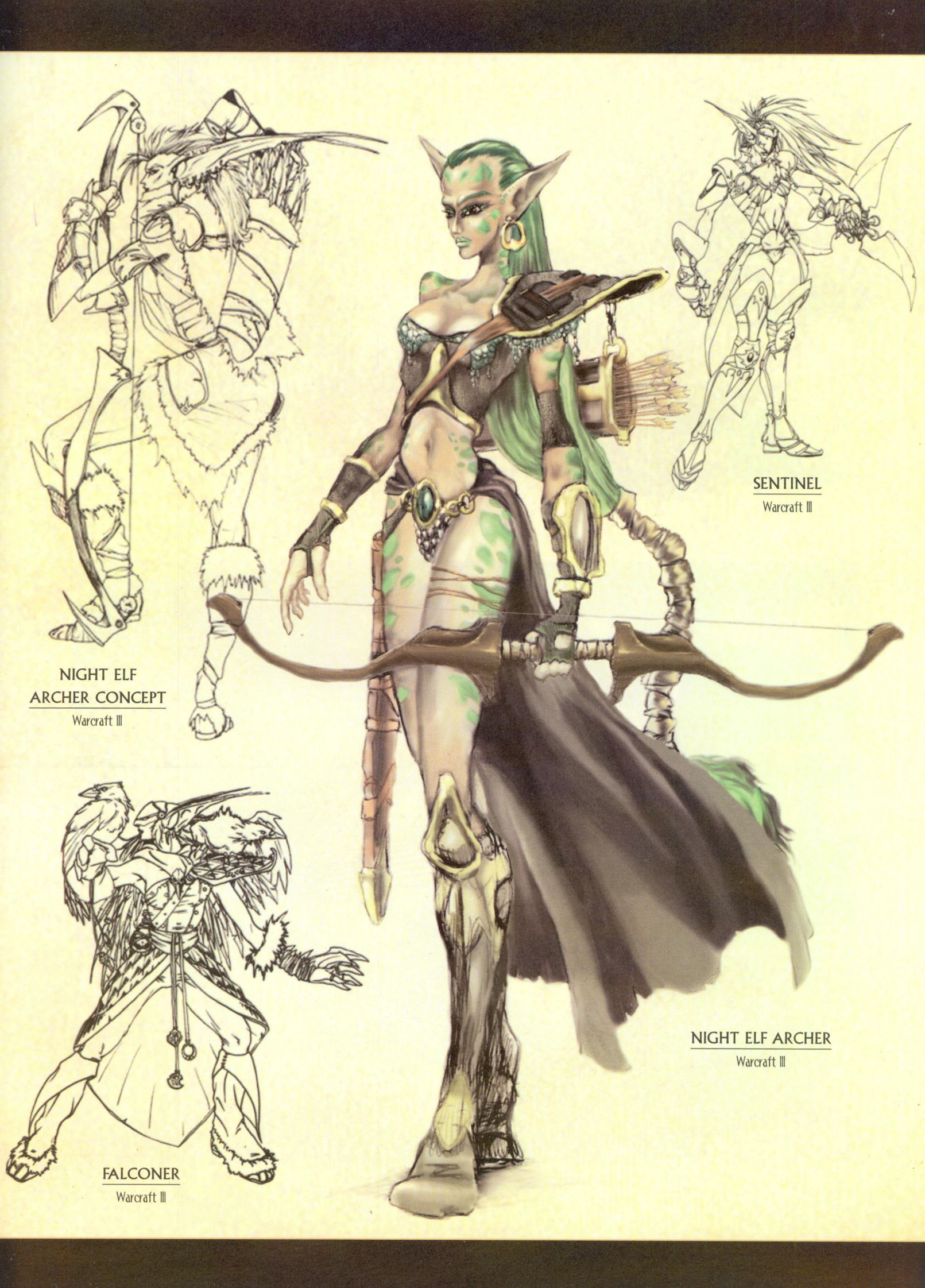
Warcraft III





TREE CITY

Warcraft III



NIGHT ELF
ARCHER CONCEPT
Warcraft III

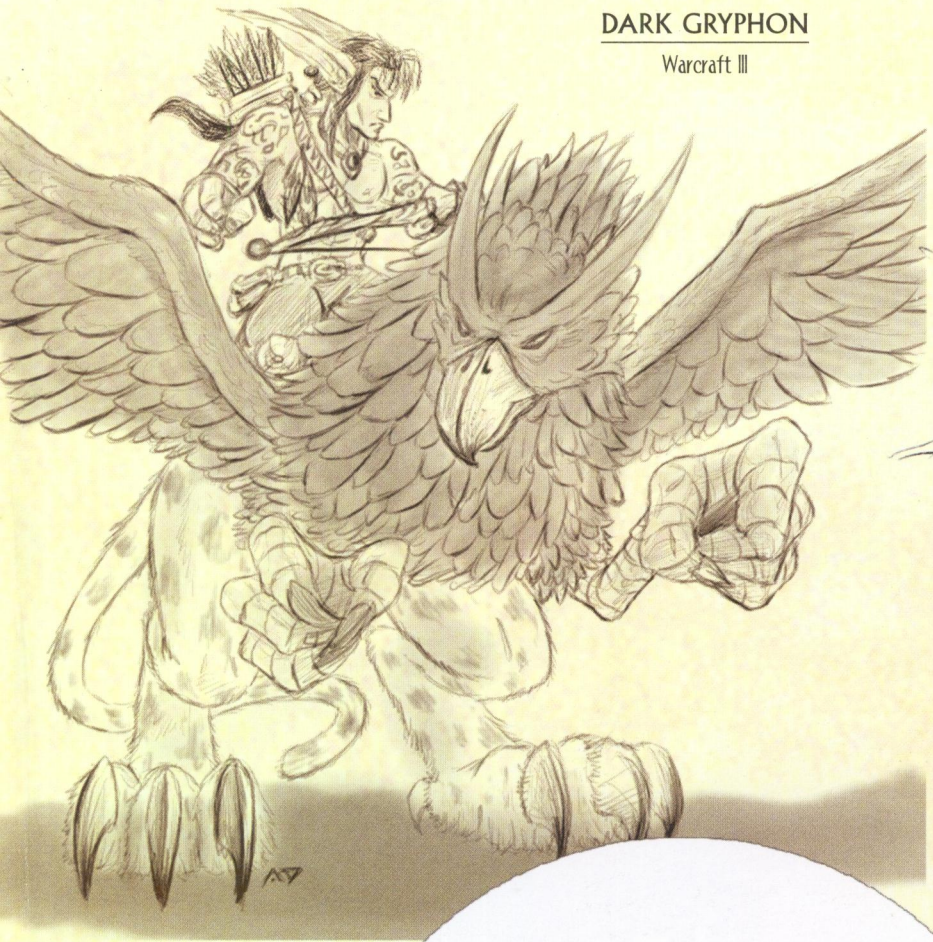
SENTINEL
Warcraft III

NIGHT ELF ARCHER
Warcraft III

FALCONER
Warcraft III

DARK GRYPHON

Warcraft III



HIPPOGRYPH

Warcraft III





WIND RIDER

Warcraft III

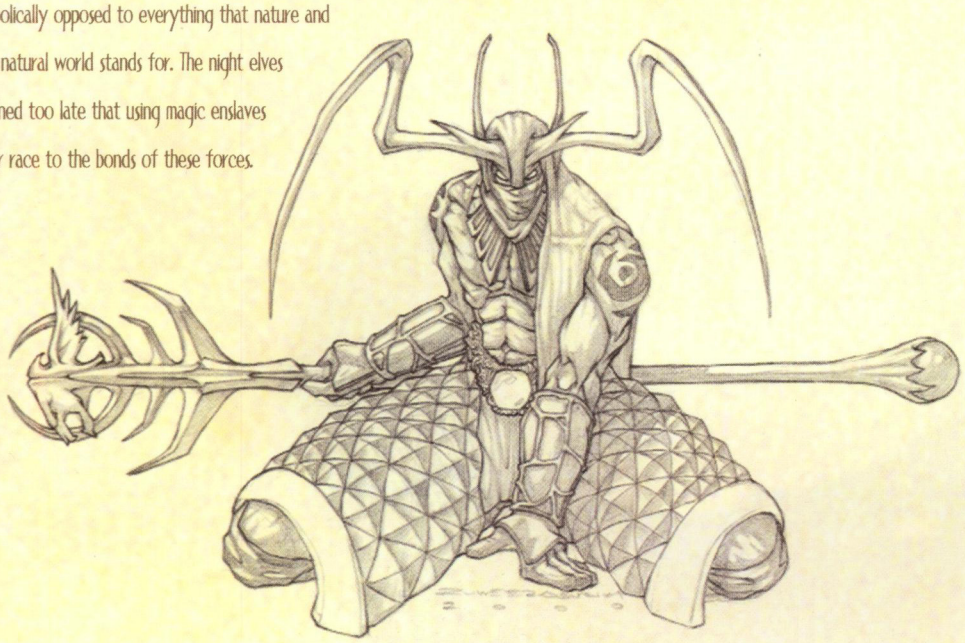
TRANSCENDENT

Warcraft III





BOUND BY MAGIC – Magic is innately chaotic, diabolically opposed to everything that nature and the natural world stands for. The night elves learned too late that using magic enslaves their race to the bonds of these forces.





DRUID OF THE TALON

Warcraft III



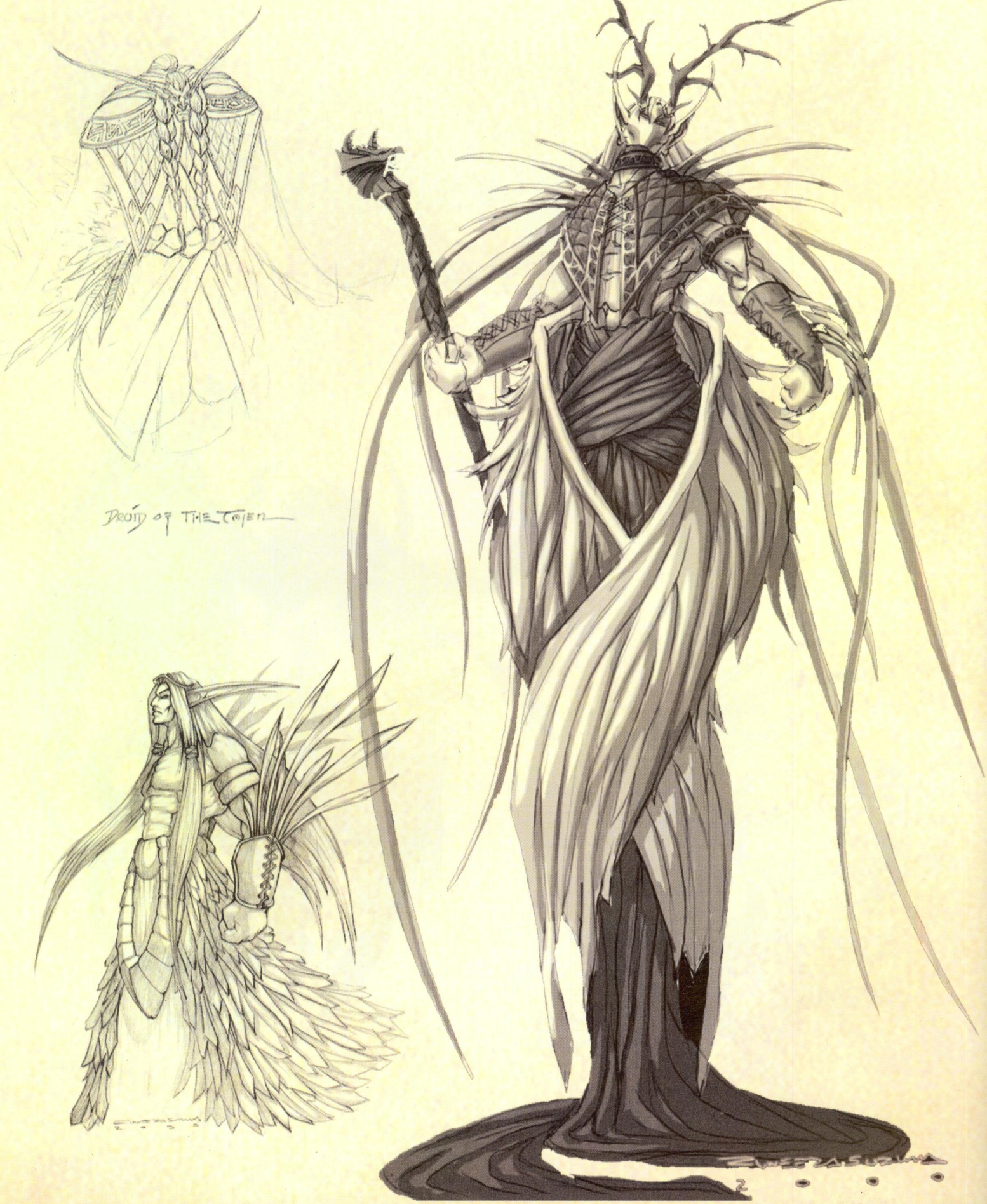
ARCH DRUID CONCEPTS

Warcraft III



DRUID OF THE TALON

Warcraft III





DRUID OF THE CLAW
Warcraft III



SATYR
Warcraft III

CHIMERA
Warcraft III



BEAST
Warcraft III



UNDEAD

The Scourge

In developing the second playable, ancient race for Warcraft III, Blizzard sought to create bad guys that would scare even the orcs themselves. And indeed, the zombified, living corpses of the undead make the orcs look practically cuddly by comparison.

Why is the land of Azeroth suddenly plagued with the horror of thousands of walking corpses? Blame it on the Burning Legion of demons, Warcraft's uber-bad guys. It was the demons who fought with the night elves 10,000 years ago. Now, in anticipation of another invasion of Azeroth, they have created the various minions of the undead to spread terror across the land.

As they proved with the orcs way back when (as well as the Diablo® games), Blizzard's artists clearly enjoy doing evil, and with the undead, they do it very well. The result, for the hapless humans, orcs, night elves, and for the lucky Warcraft III player, is a grotesque mob of creatures that rival those of any classic horror film.

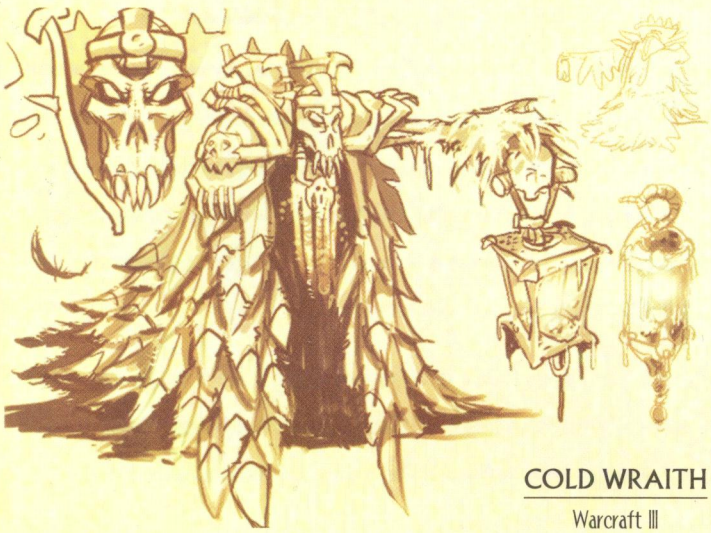
Consider the abomination. Here we have a large, lumbering creature cobbled together from the dead limbs and body parts of other corpses, who wields giant cleavers and hooks into battle. How about the fetching crypt fiend, a mummified half human, half spider, who while creeping along on arachnid limbs, summons swarms of insects to help do his killing. And then there's the meat wagon, a vehicle that collects corpses and then flings the diseased bodies back, catapult-style, onto approaching enemies.

Looking through the pages of undead art here, you can see the inspired work of artists who let the dark side of their imaginations run wild. And, as is always the case with Blizzard, they never forget to keep things—no matter how creepy the source—brimming with light and wicked humor. It's one of the keys to Blizzard's success, and their fans' obsession.

CONCEPT ART

UNDEAD

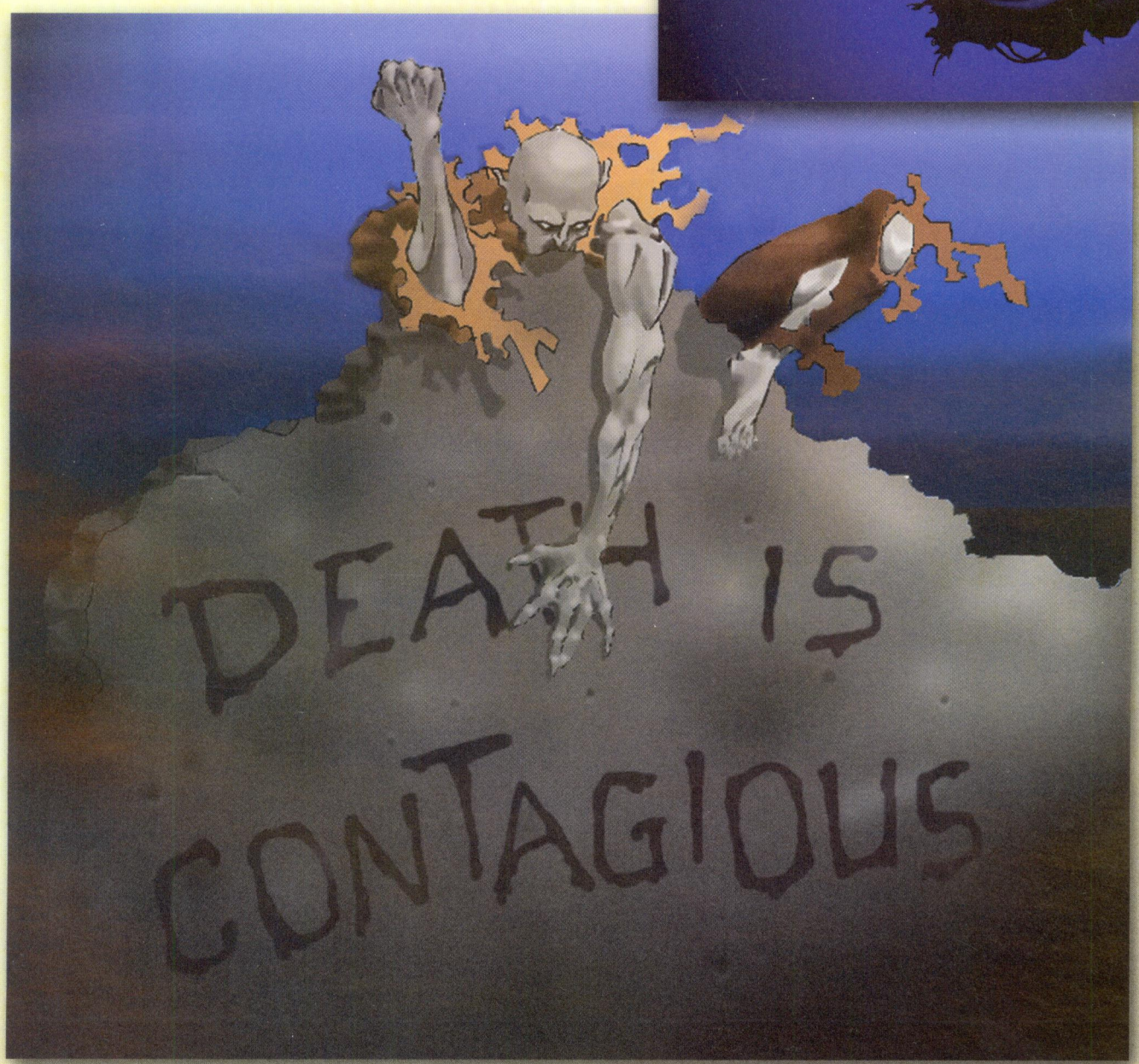


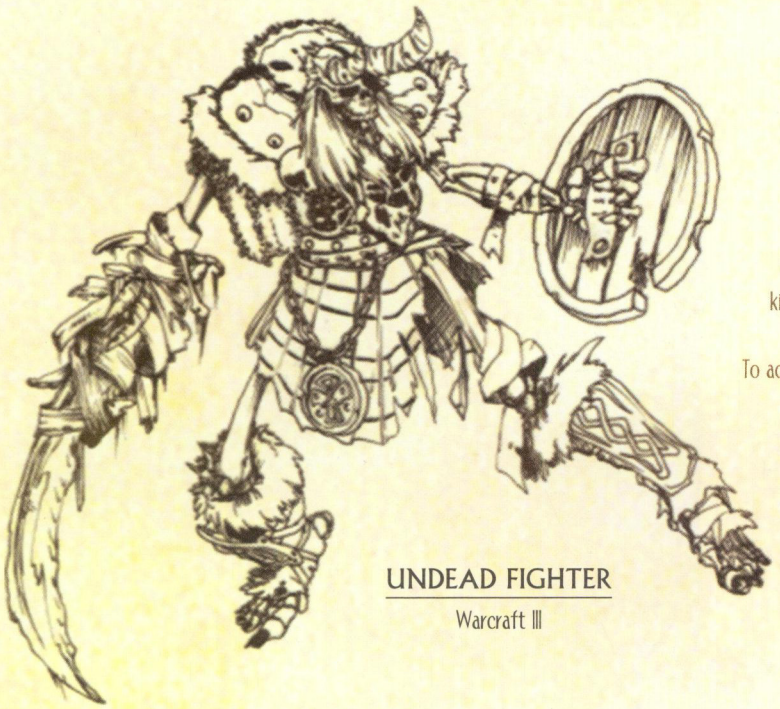


COLD WRAITH

Warcraft III







UNDEAD FIGHTER

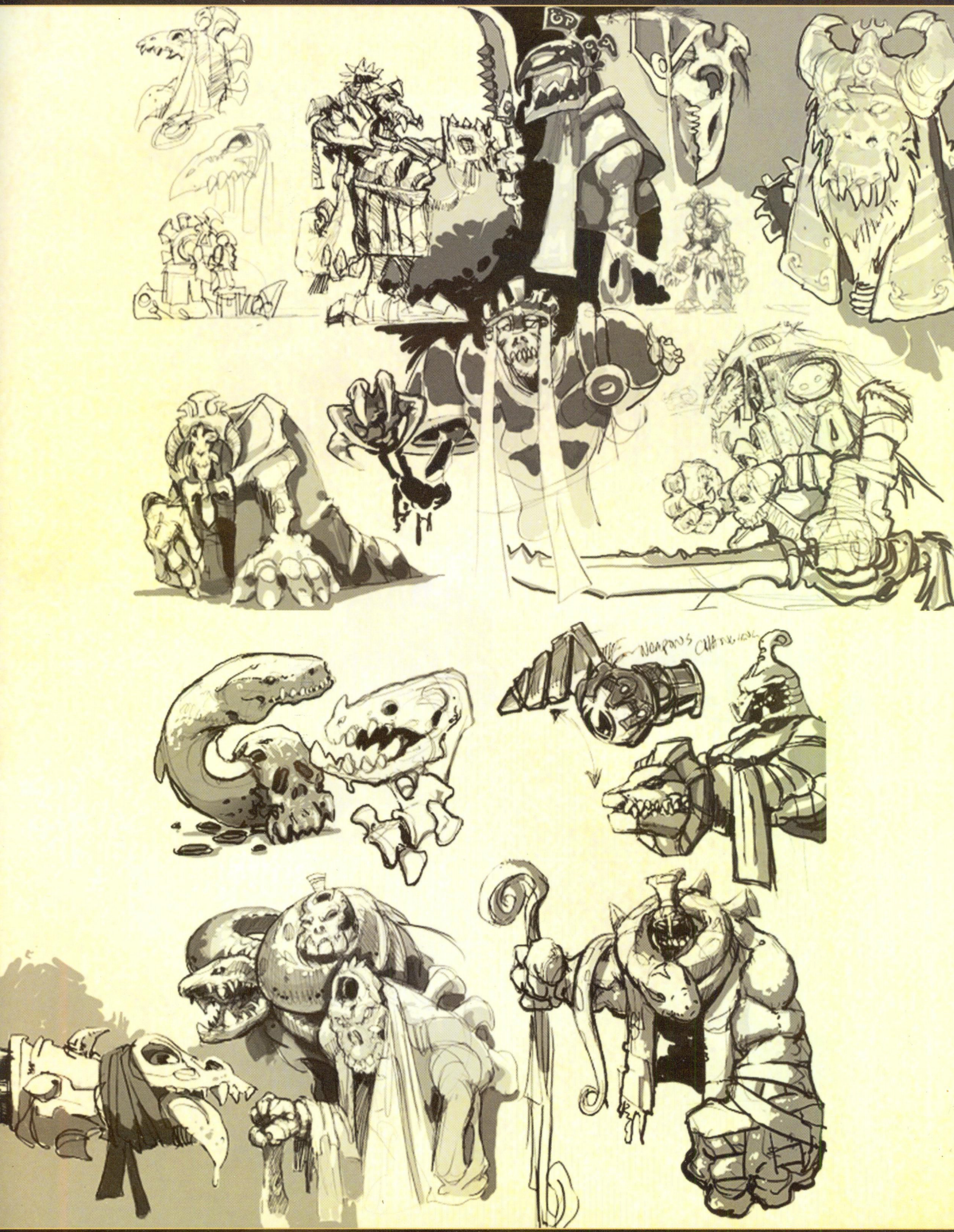
Warcraft III

THE UNDEAD SCOURGE – We've all seen any number of undead armies in alternate fantasy products—everyone knows what a skeleton warrior or a zombie looks like, and most gamers would easily identify a necromancer in his black robes. In Warcraft III, Blizzard sought to take those undead archetypes and keep it fairly straightforward, but also push the envelope a little and create a different character kit that hadn't necessarily been seen before.

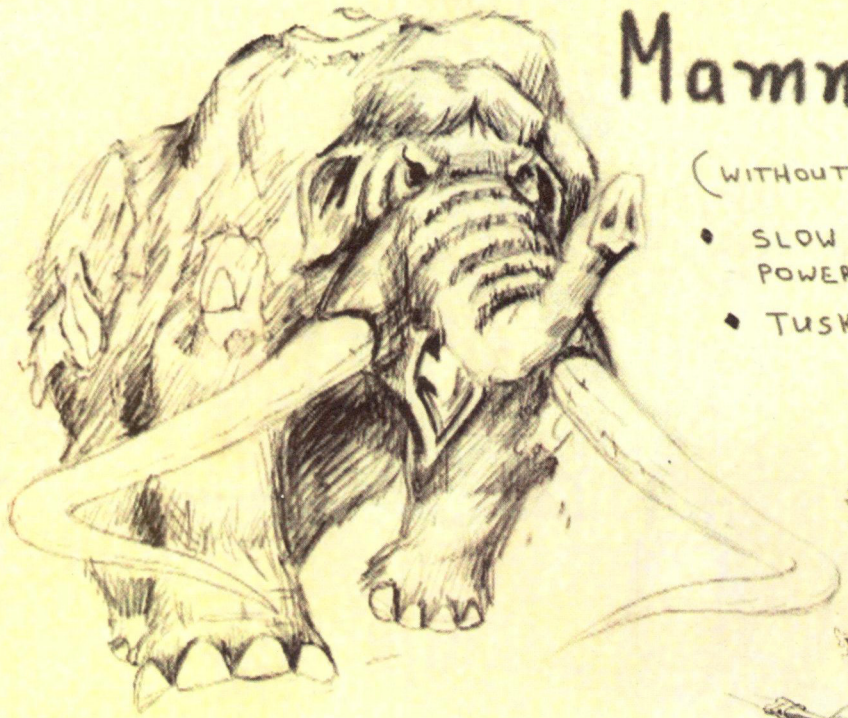
To accomplish this, the artists did a lot of freeform jamming from the start to come up with some cool variations on zombies and ghouls and skeletons. By keeping the creative parameters loose, they were able to produce some macabre mutations on this classically creepy race.







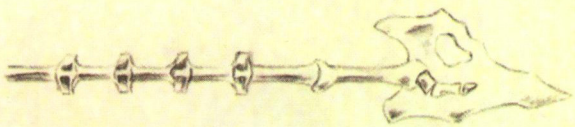

Fx Hounds
Hey look at me my head's on fire



Mammoth

(WITHOUT RIDER)

- SLOW BUT POWERFUL
- TUSK ATTACK

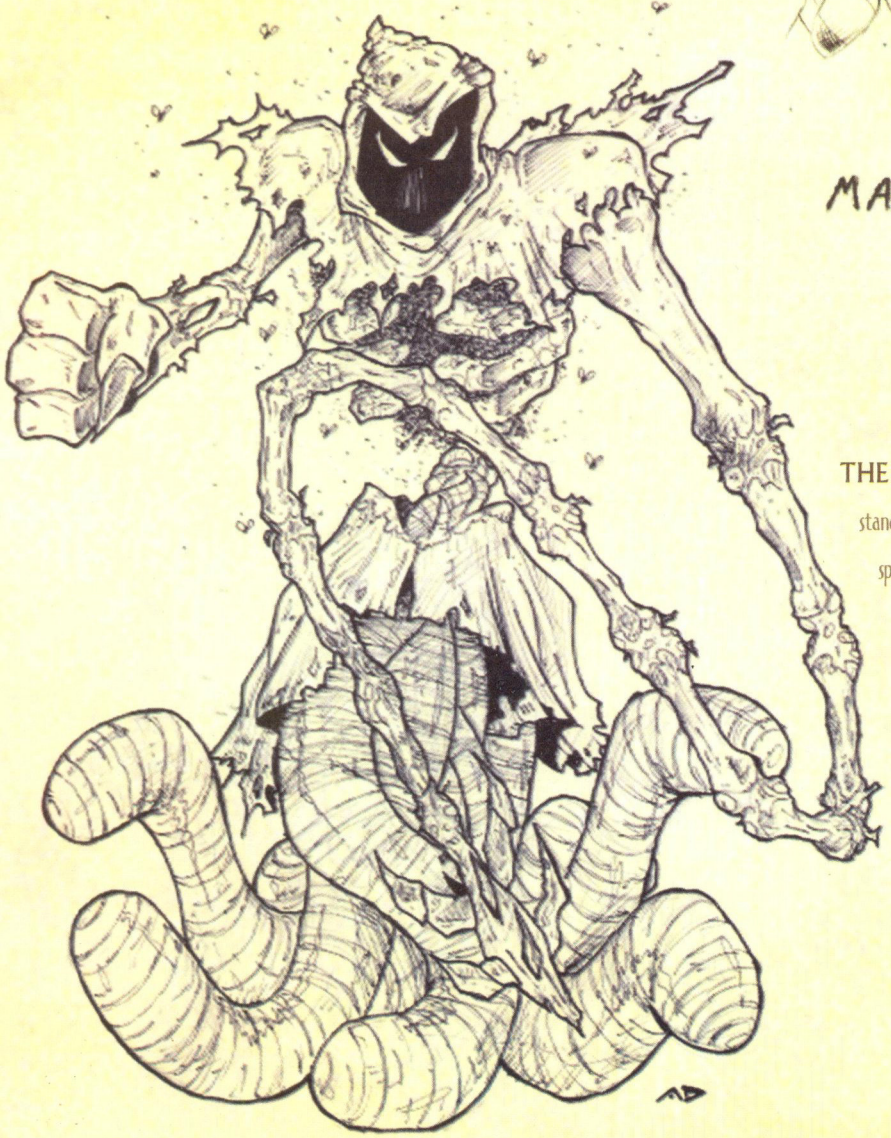


BONE LANCE

- LONG RANGE
- +'s AGAINST UNDEAD
- 1 SHOT MASS DAMAGE – LANCE MUST BE THROWN, THEN RETRIEVED. RANGE LIMITED TO SCREEN VISIBILITY.



MAMMOTH RIDER



THE ARCTIC LANDS OF NORTHREND – From a conceptual standpoint, there was a concerted effort to communicate the notion that undeath spreads through plague, rather than acting as a supernatural curse. Blizzard also chose to incorporate the elemental effect of cold. The undead phenomenon spawns from the arctic land of Northrend and the idea of freezing powers is truly unique for undead creatures in fantasy games—who knows, the chill may even help keep their grotesque and often rotting corpses fresh for battle.



LICH LORD
Warcraft III

BANSHEE
Warcraft III

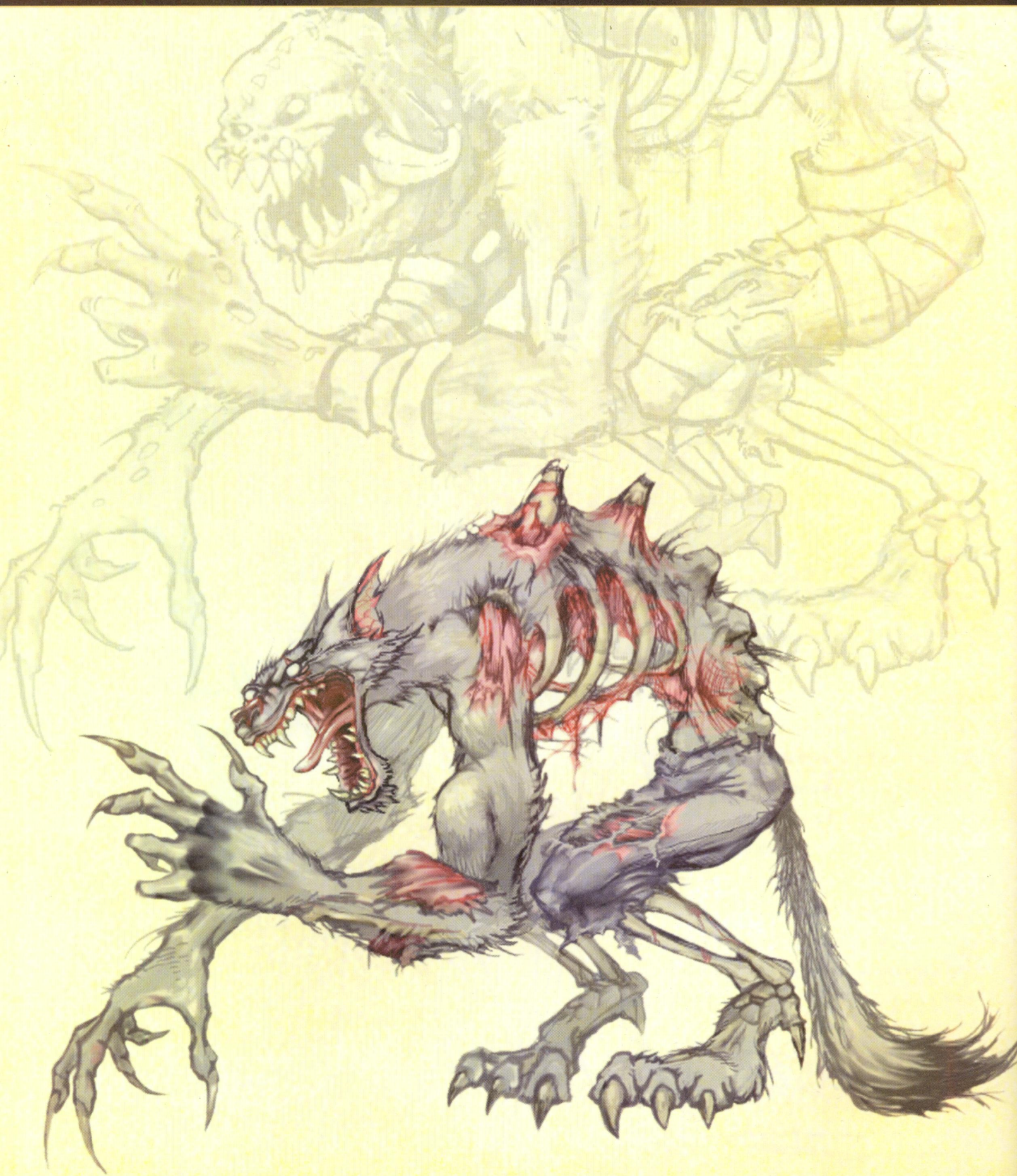


SKELETAL LORD
Warcraft III

GHOUL CONCEPTS

Warcraft III







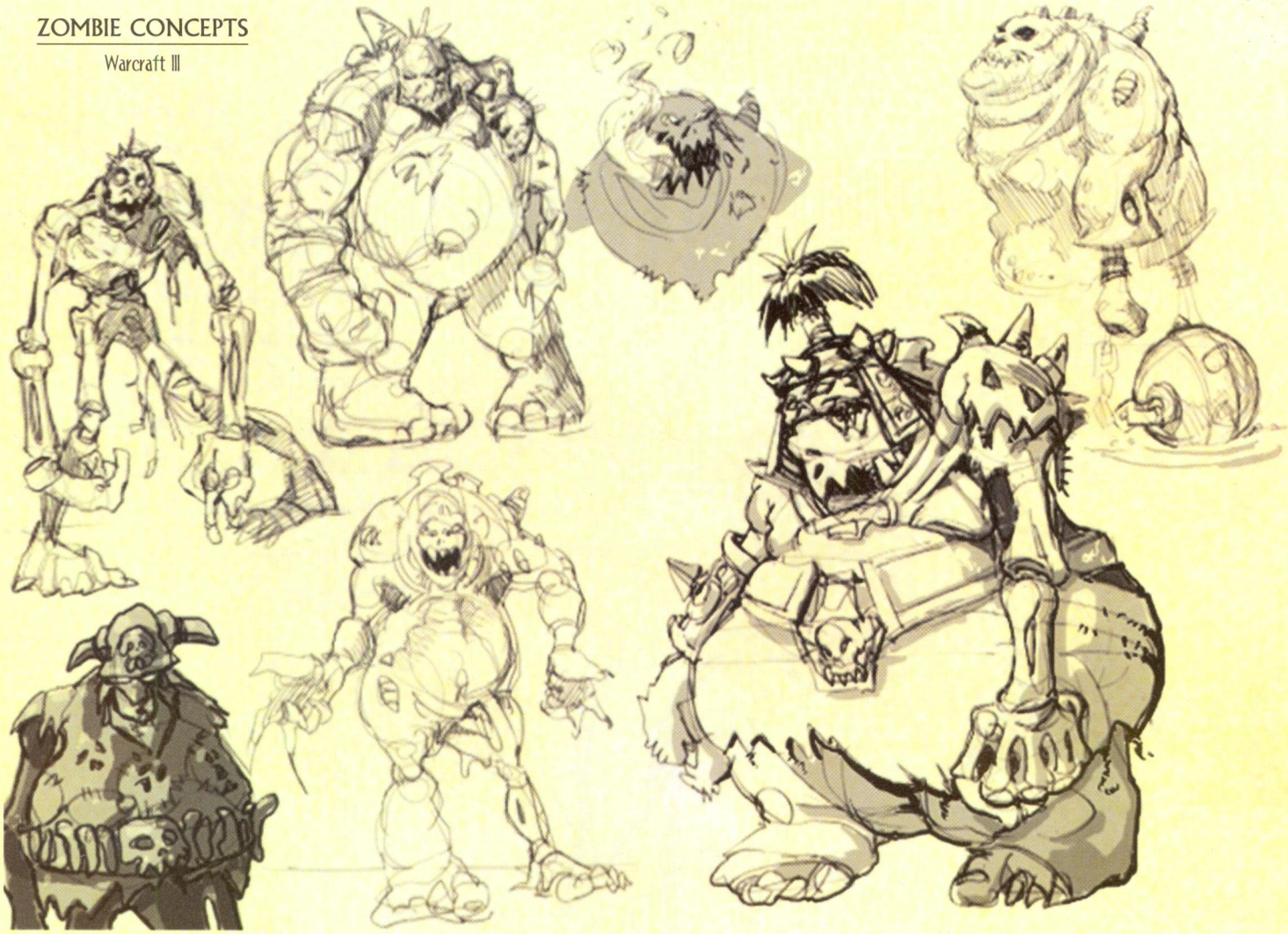
NECROMANCER

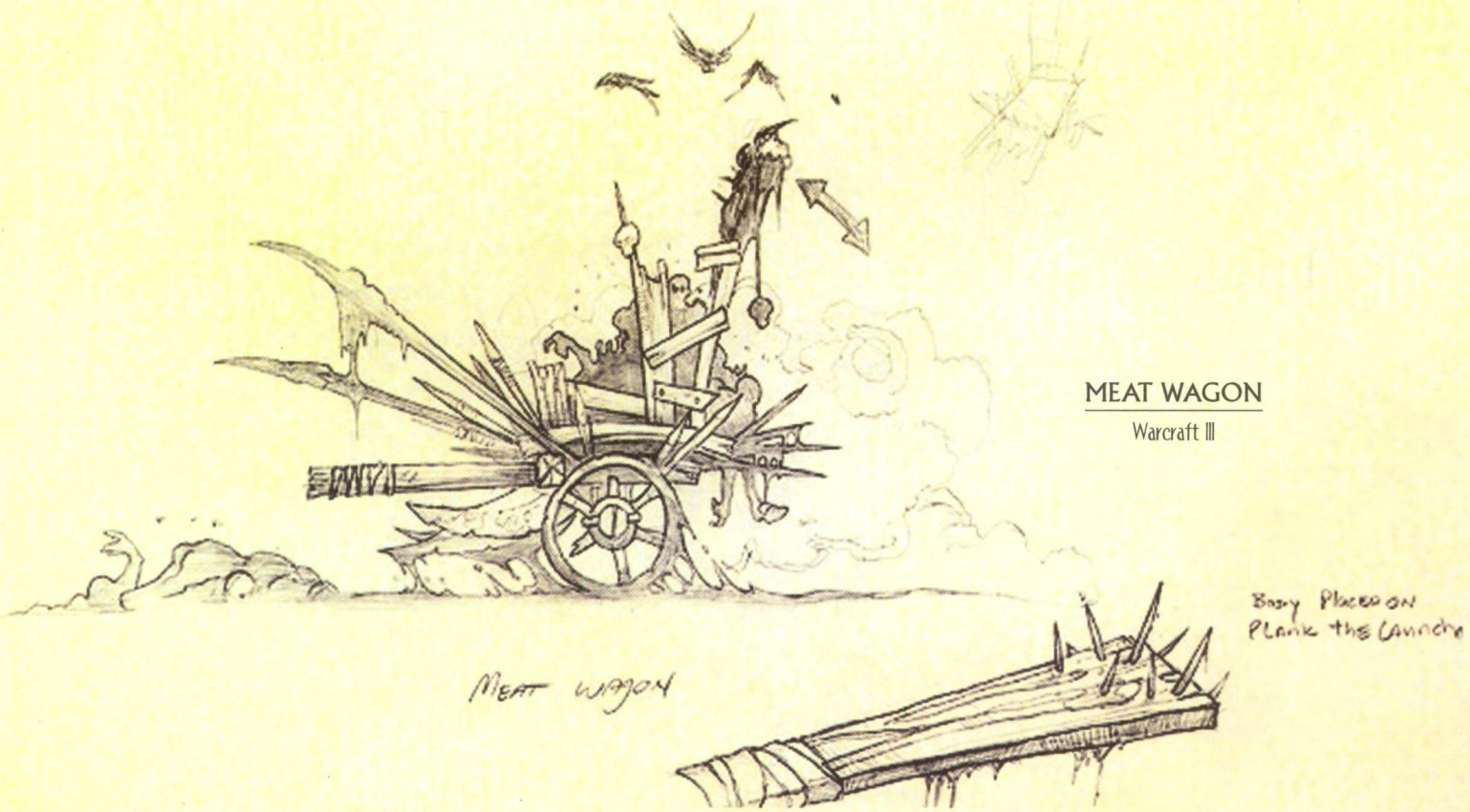
Warcraft III

NECROMANCERS – Necromancers were once the most powerful sorcerers of Dalaran until they made a pact with the Lich King to preserve their humanity in exchange for their service to the undead cause. Hence, they are specifically not plagued, even though they revel in nothing except the study of the plague. This allows them to act with greater impunity in the human world, enabling them to seamlessly infiltrate Alliance communities—because they're not rotting, their physical appearance does not reveal their deathly motives. Although necromancers are still plenty evil and creepy, this is why the Warcraft III artists render this character type with so many human characteristics, as well.

ZOMBIE CONCEPTS

Warcraft III





MEAT WAGON

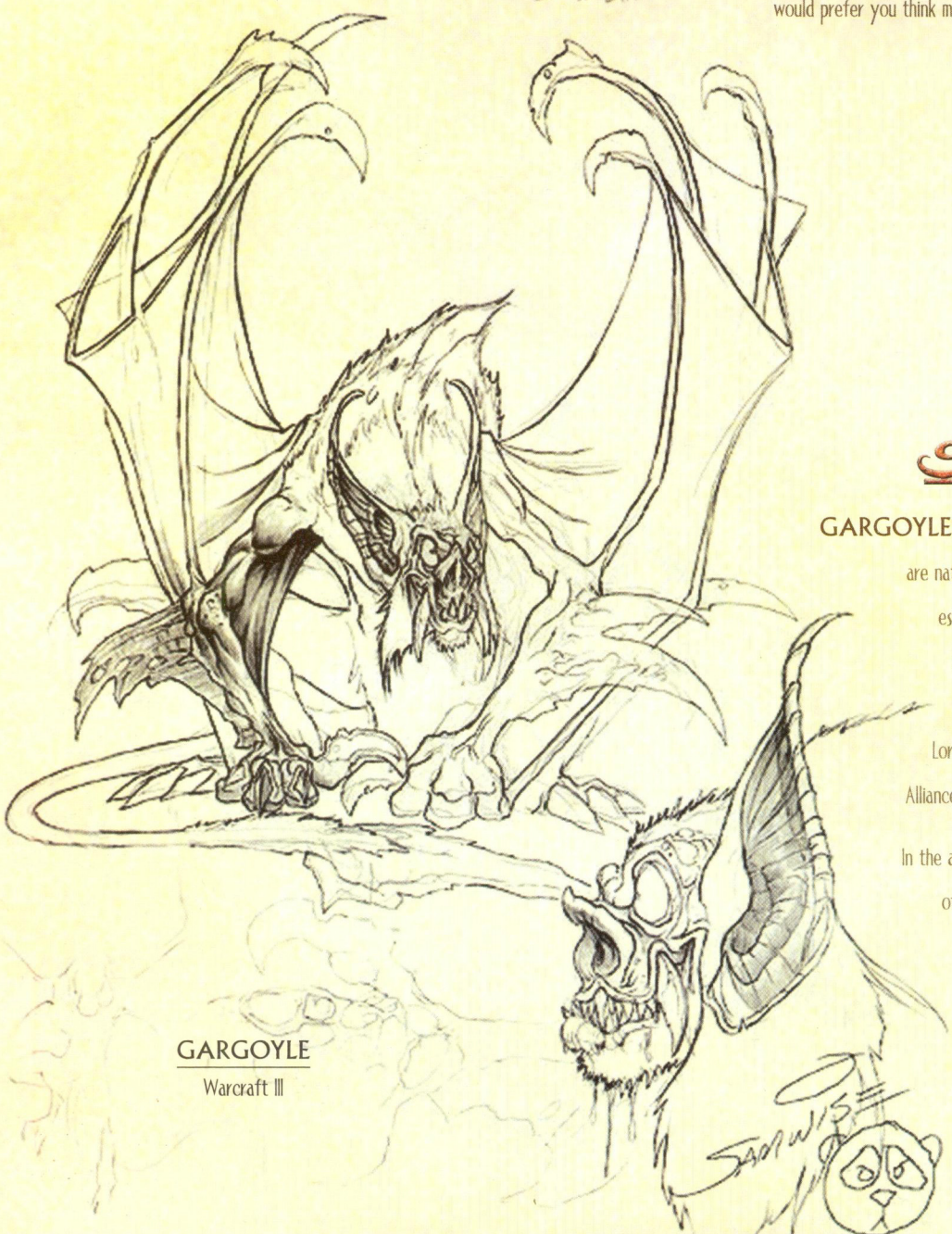
Warcraft III



CARRION BIRDS

Warcraft III

ABOMINATIONS – Abominations are perhaps the most horrific creation of the undead Scourge. These monstrous creatures, riddled with hooks and chains, are eviscerated with entrails spilling from their abdomens. Gargantuan and simple-minded, these grotesque beasts are even stronger than ogres. They are sewn together from different body parts and animated to do nothing but slaughter. Although abominations are loosely based on the concept of flesh golems, the artists at Blizzard would prefer you think more along the lines of Frankenstein on crack.

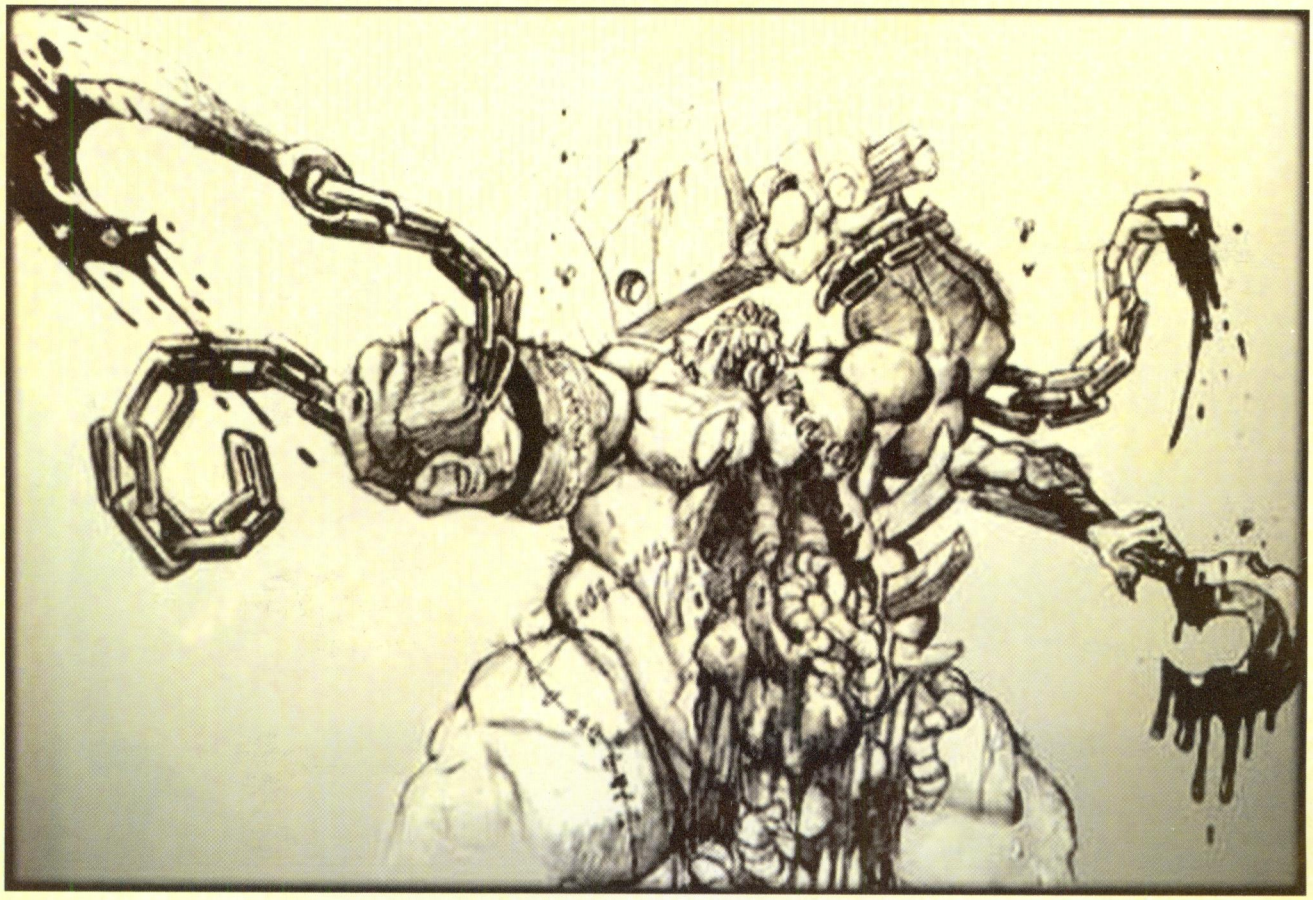


GARGOYLE

Warcraft III

GARGOYLES AND CRYPT FIENDS – Both of these creatures are native to the land of Northrend where the Lich King first established his power base. Gargoyles are spindly flying creatures that have evolved tough crystalline hides as a defensive armor, making them nearly immune to harm. When the Scourge invaded Lorderon, they brought gargoyles with them to counter the Alliance's airborne gryphon rider attacks.

In the ancient world, the crypt fiends were known as the Spider Lords of Azjol-Nerub, an age-old spider kingdom that predated most civilizations. They created a vast underground empire beneath the arctic caps of Northrend. Upon the Lich King's recent rise to power, he enslaved this once noble race after defeating the spiders with his undead army. The crypt fiends now exist as rotting semblances of their former might.



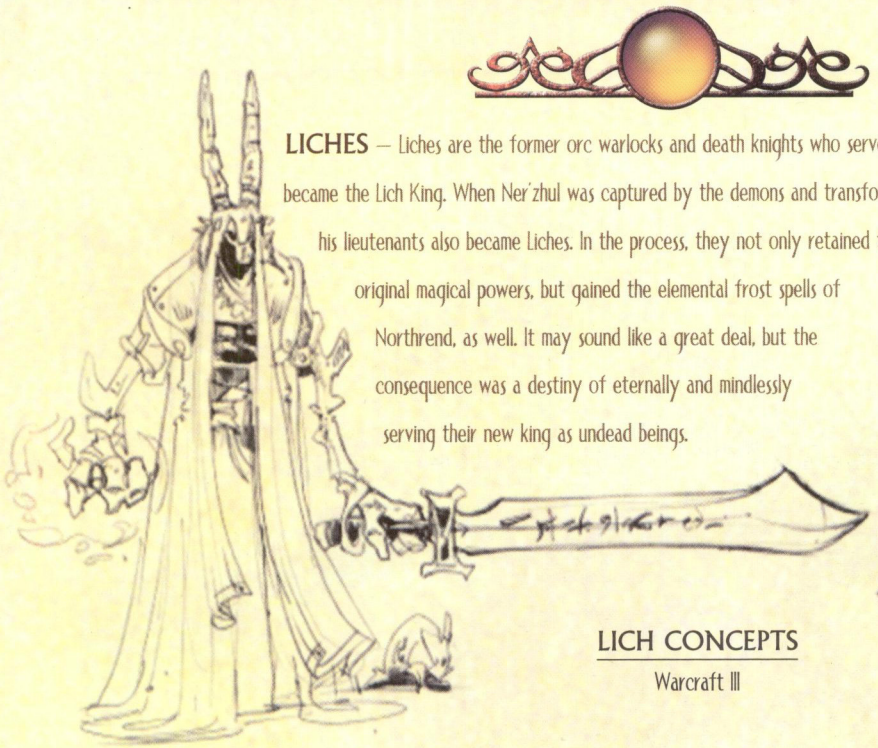
ABOMINATION

Warcraft III



CRYPT FIEND

Warcraft III



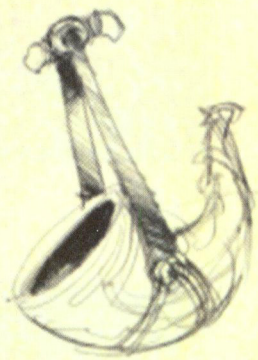
LICHES – Liches are the former orc warlocks and death knights who served Ner'zhul before he became the Lich King. When Ner'zhul was captured by the demons and transformed into the Lich King, his lieutenants also became Liches. In the process, they not only retained their original magical powers, but gained the elemental frost spells of Northrend, as well. It may sound like a great deal, but the consequence was a destiny of eternally and mindlessly serving their new king as undead beings.

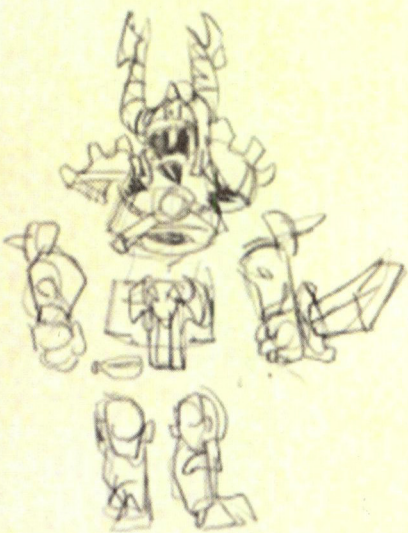


LICH CONCEPTS

Warcraft III







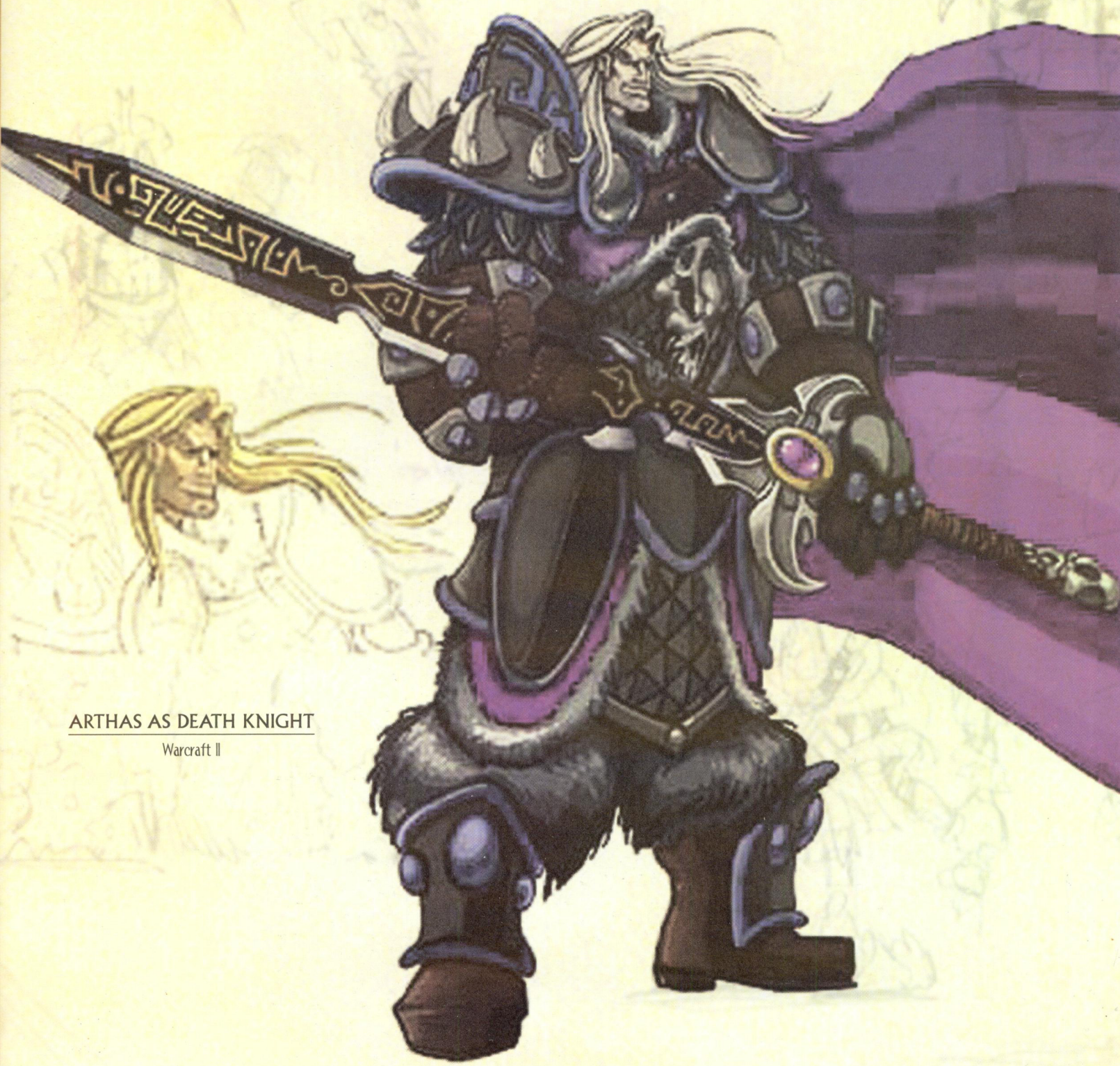
DREAD LORDS – Dread lords are actually demons, agents of the Burning Legion who have been sent to police the Lich King and ensure that he does the job for which he was created. Look carefully into the eyes of this drawing and you will see the unrest that lies within. These powerful beings are not content with their pedestrian role; they would much rather be putting their evil drive to use conquering worlds and dominating unsuspecting cultures. They are crafty lords of the night, psychic vampires if you will, which makes them outstanding counter-intelligence agents and tricksters in general. This fierce and undeniable tension between motivation and obligation is bound to disturb the balance within the ranks of the undead.



DREAD LORD
Warcraft III

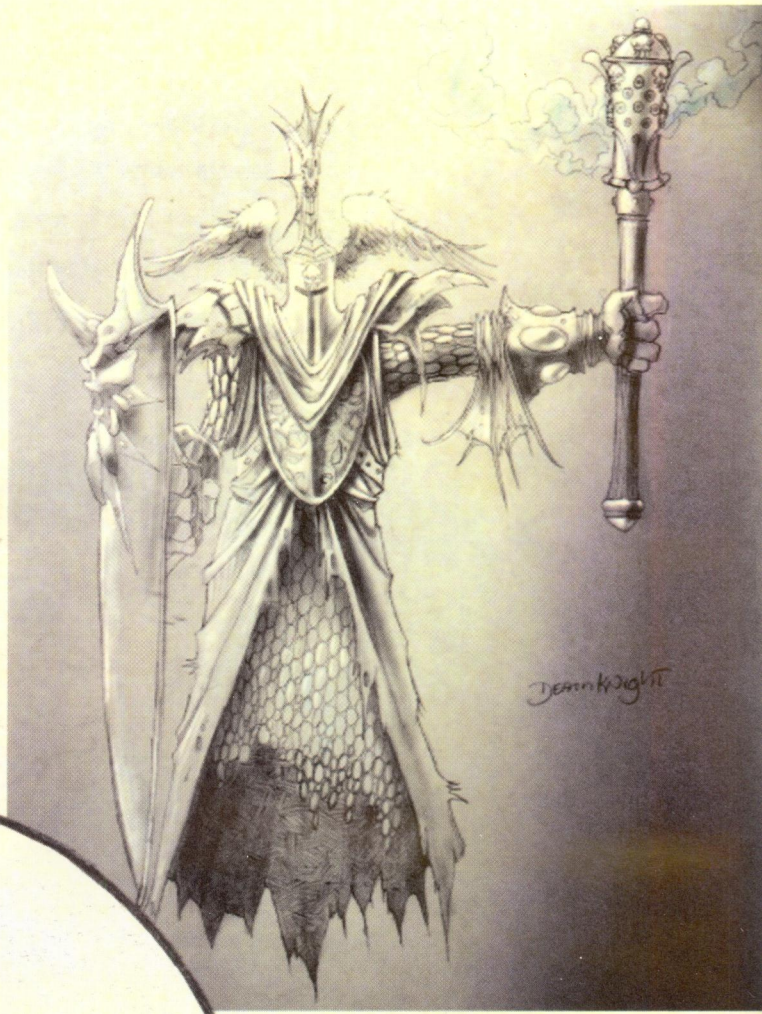
DEATH KNIGHTS – Death knights were once great human warriors, perhaps even paladins, who were lured to the side of darkness. Forsaking the light and their own people granted them tremendous powers over the dead, including runeblades that suck the souls of their victims. Although they have retained their humanity, they are definitely bound to the world of the Lich King.

A staple character type since Warcraft II, death knights have taken many conceptual forms over the years. Originally, they were illustrated as the spirits of orc warlocks inhabiting the dead bodies of human knights. For Warcraft III, the artists initially planned to continue this wraith-like appearance for the death knights (see conceptual sketch of totally disembodied being at top of page 101), but instead chose to put a little more viscera into this character. There were already enough guys floating around in robes in the undead army, so this sketch ended up serving as the model for a creep or neutral creature in the game called a revenant. The early color drawing of Arthas on this page shows the deliberate effort to default to a more earthbound warrior with black armor and a massive sword.



ARTHAS AS DEATH KNIGHT

Warcraft II



EARLY DEATH KNIGHT CONCEPT

Warcraft III



DEATH KNIGHT

Warcraft II

ARTHAS – Arthas is the Prince of Lorderon and one of the youngest paladins. Ardent and short-tempered, he is eager to prove himself to his father, the king, as well as Uther, the leader of the paladins. Ultimately, his inner failings allow the powers of darkness to corrupt him. In a bold, but reckless, attempt to save his people from the undead, he inadvertently picks up the runeblade, Frostmourne, which steals his own soul and irrevocably damns him for all time. This is all part of a very well thought-out plan by the Lich King for which we have seen only partially unfold.





ARTHAS' ARMOR

Warcraft III

ACT III: ARTHAS' BETRAYAL – A jubilant parade for the returning prince takes a sinister turn when Arthas reveals his altered allegiance and new look—white hair, gaunt features, and the black armor of the undead army. He raises his runeblade, Frostmourne, to the neck of King Terenas and slays his own father in the name of the Scourge.

In a brilliant feat of art direction, Blizzard chose to use a Hitchcock-style approach to this death scene. Rather than featuring the violence, the deathblow is depicted in shadow for infinitely more dramatic impact.

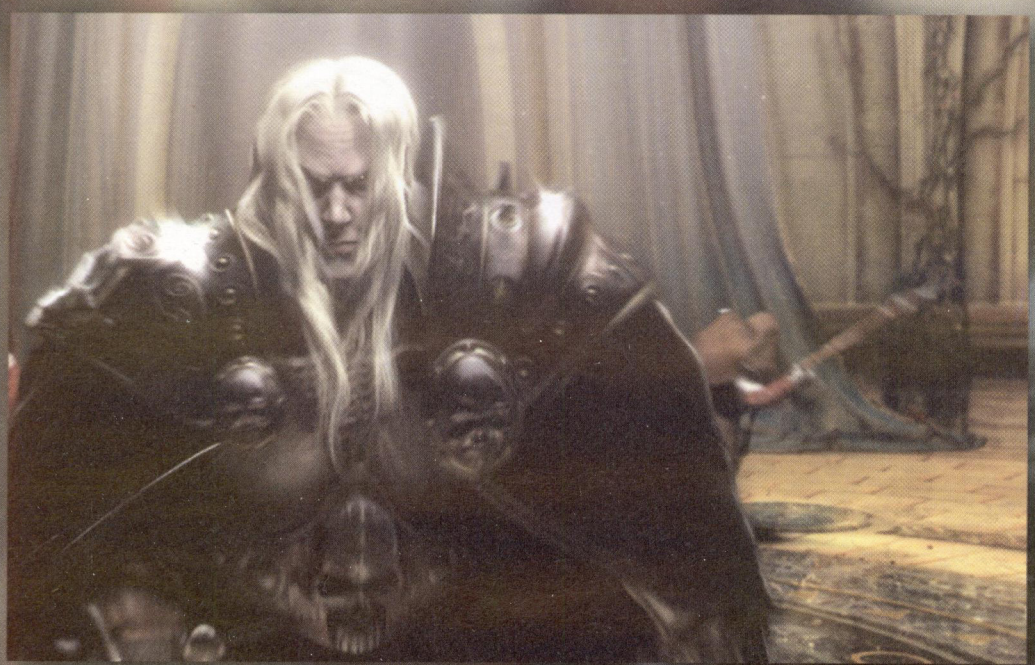
In sharp contrast to the cold, dark feel portrayed in Act II, here Blizzard wanted to use brighter, warmer tones to convey the joyous and victorious atmosphere surrounding the albeit naïve welcome for Arthas.

When the drama returns to the throne room, the colors once again default to staler hues, providing a visual foreshadowing for the unspeakable events that follow (as seen on the following pages).













DEMONS

The Burning Legion

The demons of the Burning Legion are so evil and destructive that Blizzard removed them from Warcraft III as a playable race. Originally conceived as the fifth playable race, the demons are the ultimate bad guys of the Warcraft universe—the rivals of the ancient night elves from a war 10,000 years ago and the sinister force behind both the rampaging orcs and the armies of undead now invading Azeroth in Warcraft III. The Burning Legion is a horrific, dominating force from another realm who exist only to destroy and devour everything in their path—even entire planets.

And therein lay the problem. The demons were too evil and too huge to be translated to a race that players could control. Would a race that can destroy entire planets actually need peons to chop wood? So, in February 2001, after much balancing, Blizzard decided to make the Burning Legion a non-playable race. They're still in the game, but now they're the common enemy to all—a nightmare so huge that it may actually get the orcs and humans to stop fighting each other.

Until now, Blizzard had released the names of only two Burning Legion units—the Daemon Warlock and the Infernal—and only showed the Infernal in a video released at a gaming convention in England in 1999. Since then Blizzard has kept the Burning Legion largely a mystery, until their nightmarish role in the plot is revealed.

CONCEPT ART

DEMONS



EREDAR WARLOCK CONCEPT

Warcraft III



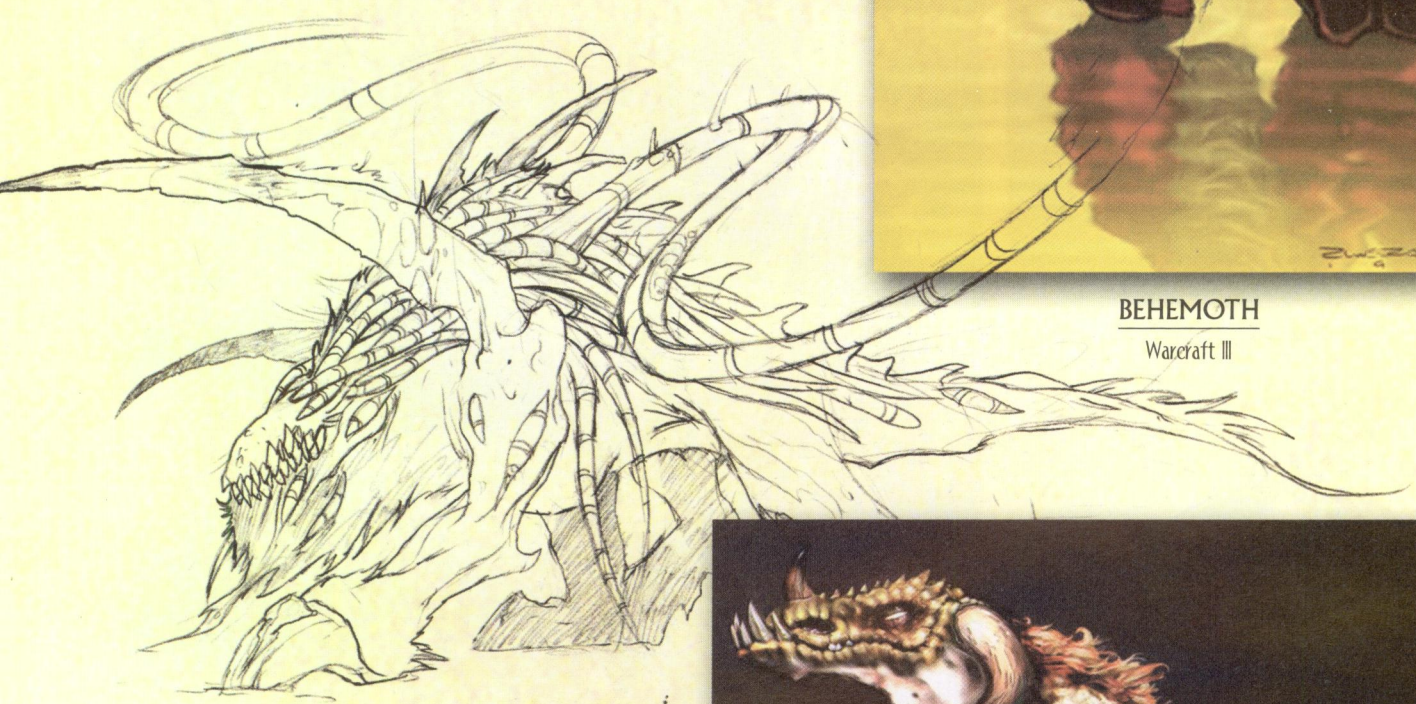
INFERNAL

Warcraft III



BEHEMOTH

Warcraft III





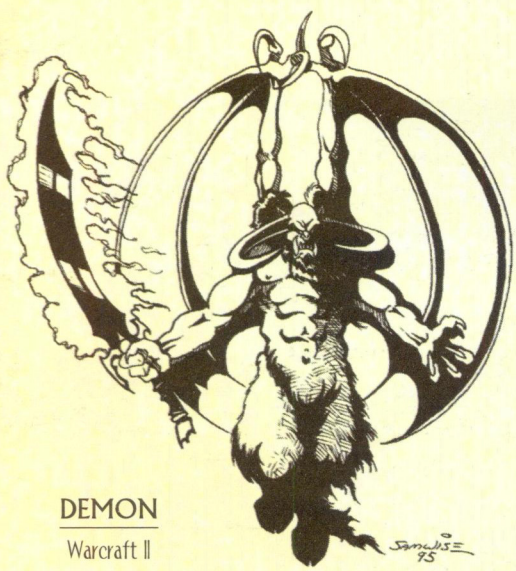
FELHOUND

Warcraft III



DECEIVER

Warcraft III



DEMON

Warcraft II



OVERLORD

Warcraft III



SUCCUBUS
Warcraft III



INFERNAL CONCEPT
Warcraft III

THE BURNING LEGION – Blizzard's goal with this race was to create a menace that was bigger than orcs and humans, something that has been a threat to the universe since the dawn of time. They had already established demons in the Warcraft mythos from the very first game, but wanted to expand the story in Warcraft III to reintroduce the Burning Legion as a much bigger threat than anyone originally envisioned.

Careful thought was given, however, to how this race would be perceived. Unlike *Diablo*, for instance, the demons do not intone a sense of Heaven and Hell, giving them a more universal context. The story of their creation and propagation is a masterful piece of storytelling by the omnipotent beings at Blizzard.

The Burning Legion's roaming army feed on magic. Since every world has innate magics about it, there has always been plenty for these maniacal beasts to consume. Indeed, there is something inherently magical about creation itself, and it is at this early stage in the creation of the universe that the demons made their start...

In the beginning, the titans moved to the universe, shaping worlds to their liking and establishing a sense of order. One of their greatest warriors, a bronze titan named Sargeras, betrayed them. After aeons of honoring his duty to fight these demons from the far reaches of the universe, he was eventually driven mad. Subsequently, he rallied all the different demon cultures he had previously defeated and forged them into a single army called the Burning Legion. Under his control, he dispatched his demon minions to undo the titans' work throughout the universe. With each world they annihilated, they grew stronger by soaking up that land's innate magic to feed their ever-increasing numbers. Azeroth, the land of Warcraft, is the only world to ever survive the Legion's attack. The first time the demons came, the night elves and the dragons barely managed to fight them back. Warcraft III is round two.

MANNOROTH – The orcs were discovered on their planet by a demon named Kil'jaeden. Although one of the leaders of the Burning Legion, this character does not appear in Warcraft III. However, he is the heavy hitter who introduced Mannoroth, and all of the rage and destruction he embodies, to the orcs. Mannoroth corrupts the orcs when Hellscream drinks his blood. Mannoroth is back and badder than ever in Warcraft III. In addition to the brilliantly horrific manner in which he is rendered, his voice is also truly something to behold.









MANNOROTH CONCEPTS

Warcraft III



MANNOROTH'S ARMOR

Warcraft III







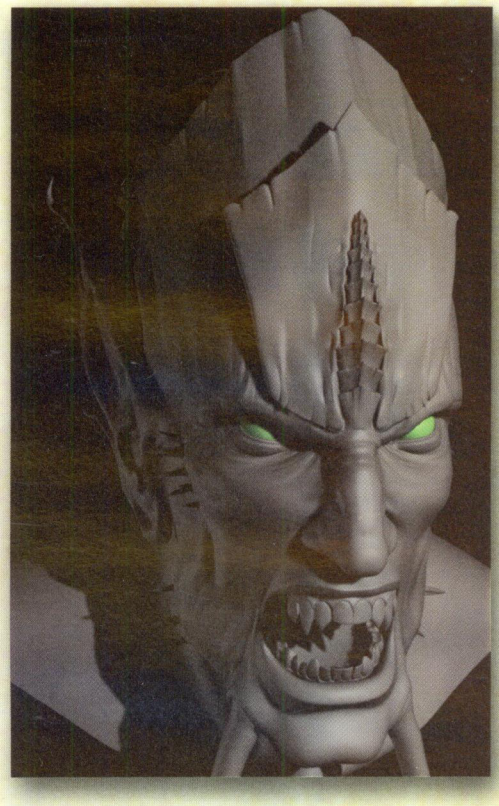




ARCHIMONDE – Archimonde and Kil'jaeden are the two chief lieutenants of the Burning Legion under Sargeras. Since their founder and leader has been missing since Warcraft: Orcs & Humans, Archimonde and his colleague decide to proceed with this new invasion. While Archimonde commands the armies, it is still unclear what Kil'jaeden is doing. This figures to be an intriguing element as the story unfolds.

Archimonde descends from a race of demons called the Eredar. Extremely brilliant and powerful, he is essentially the ultimate enemy. This is not the type of foe that you want to fight when he's angry, but that's exactly what he is. Smoldering in the disgrace of his army's retreat 10,000 years ago, his need for vengeance now fuels an already insatiable desire for power. He specifically bears a personal grudge against Furion Stormrage, the night elf leader. Indeed, he has no real interest in conquering Azeroth or following through with the dictum of the Burning Legion. Rather, he seeks power for himself. This is evident at the end of the night elf campaign, where his goal is not domination, but rather to drain the World Tree of its powers for himself to become as powerful as Sargeras was.















ARCHIMONDE SKETCH AND CINEMATIC RENDERS

Warcraft III



ARCHIMONDE CONCEPTS

Warcraft III





THEATRICAL ASPIRATIONS? – Blizzard has often discussed the possibility of channeling their cinematic talents toward an actual feature length film—it's definitely something they are interested in from a creative standpoint, but a more likely approach would be for them to develop a live-action movie. Digital animation involves a huge amount of work—the process of making sure each individual frame is perfect is quite daunting. Although always in the backs of their minds, the concept of taking on this enormous challenge is, not unlike the image of Mannoroth on this page, a bit frightening.





VISIONS OF AZEROTH

Places & Creatures

Blizzard's artists have populated Azeroth with myriad other places and creatures that add to the scope and depth of the Warcraft universe. On the lower end of the evolutionary scale is ambient life, such as birds and critters, those furry little white things (possibly victims of a human Polymorph spell) that roam the map, occasionally stepping in the way as you place your buildings.

Warcraft III enriches the world considerably with neutral units in the form of goblins, ogres, trolls, and more—some of whom will help you by offering goods and services, others who will actually join your army and fight with you. Then there are the creeps—hostile units, such as rock golems and red dragons—who you can fight for loot and experience.

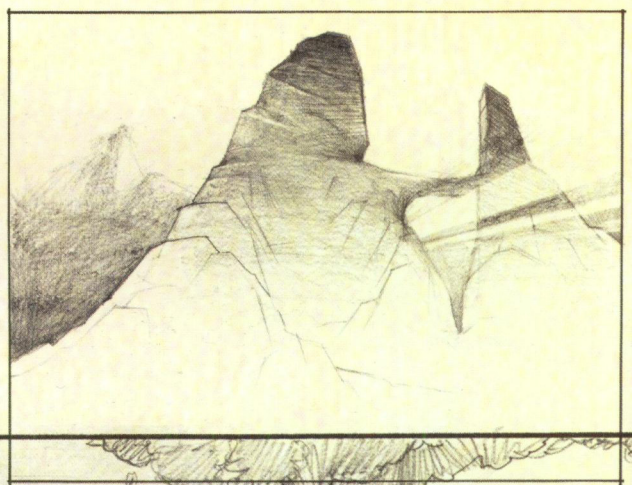
All the units in the game—from the lowliest critters to the mightiest of heroes—inhabit a world that Blizzard's artists have rendered as a real place, not just a series of flat landscapes and buildings. The architecture, in fact, has always been one of the key aspects of Warcraft's appeal, with its stylistic, slightly skewed perspective, and the unique details given to the buildings of each race.

In the cinemas, particularly those in Warcraft III, you see the artists reach for their version of "realism" through stunning 3D animation. The tone is dark and dramatic, the events related as historic storytelling. Here, the artists show a grand sense of scale, treating us to awe-inspiring vistas, magnificently rendered medieval structures, and charred battlefields.

For the artists at Blizzard, Azeroth is more than a setting, a background onto which they place their games. It's a world, a real world, given life by their fiery and fervid imaginations.

CONCEPT ART

MISCELLANEOUS



BLACKROCK SPIRE

Warcraft Adventures



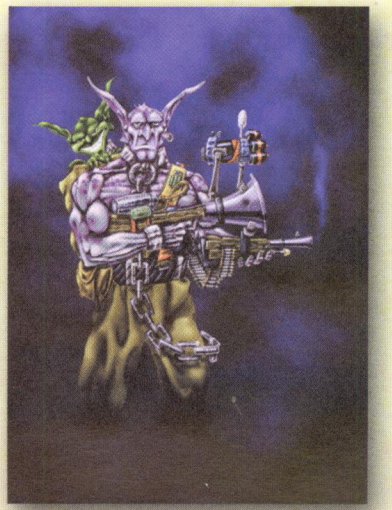


HYJAL SUMMIT

Warcraft III

GOBLIN CONCEPTS

Warcraft II / Warcraft III







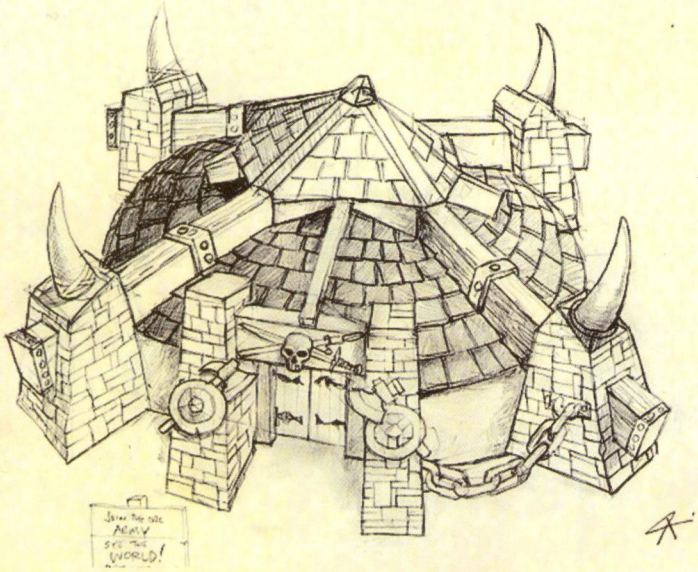


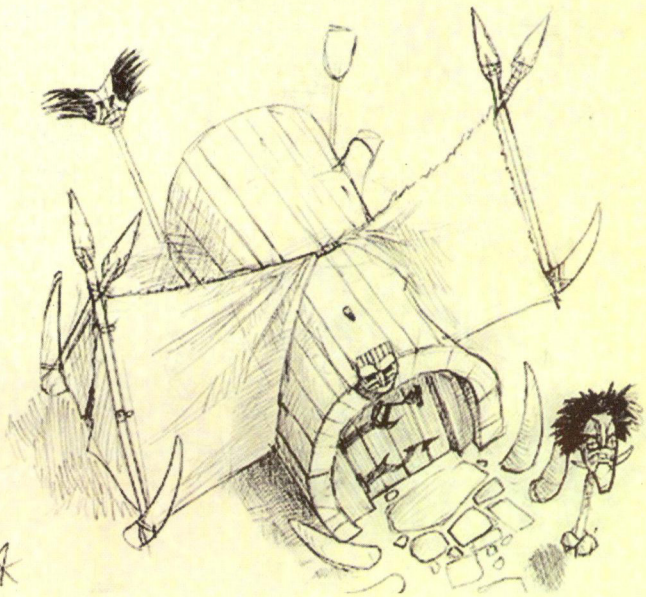


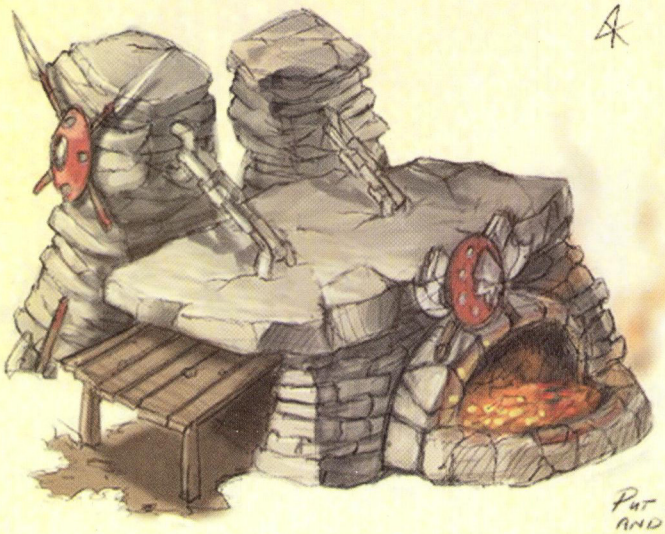





GOBLIN WARRIOR
DARK Armor Big Heads Body's
DRC or Goblin





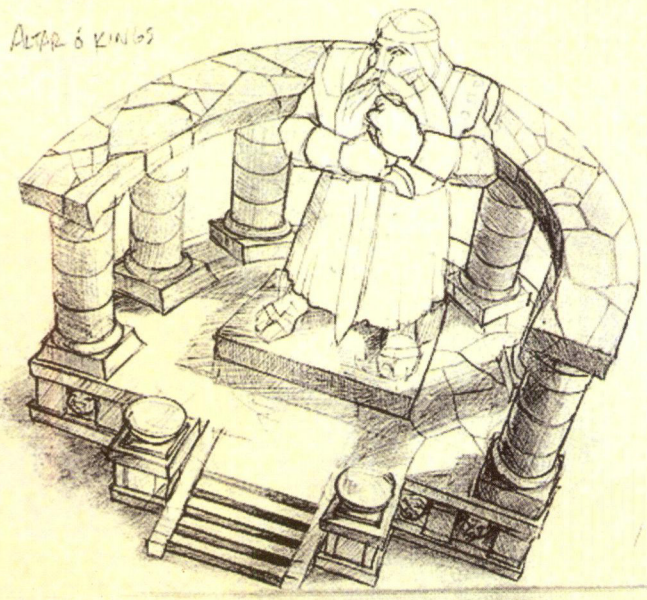


FORGE

FORGE
Warcraft III

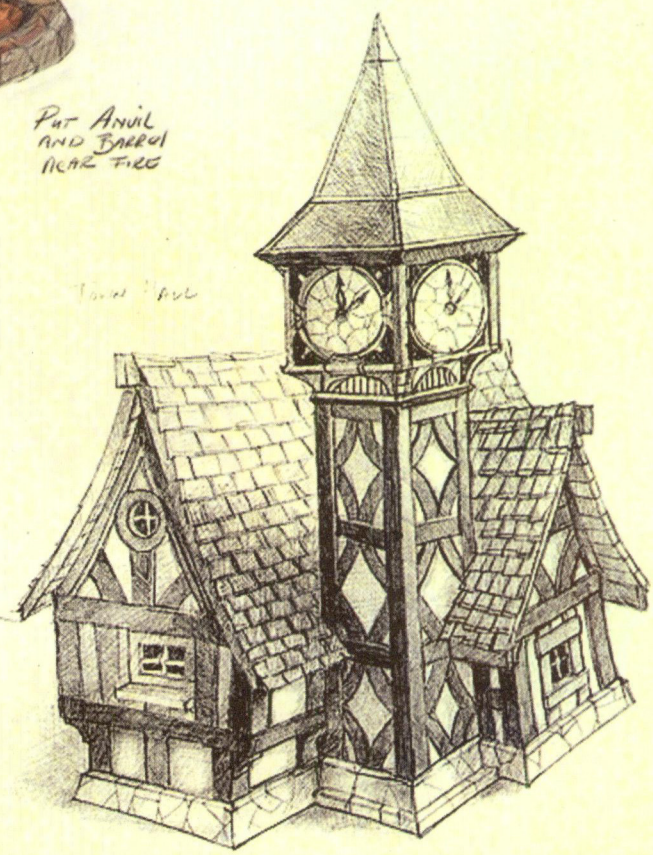
PUT ANVIL AND BARREL NEAR FIRE

ALTAR OF KINGS



ALTAR OF KINGS
Warcraft III

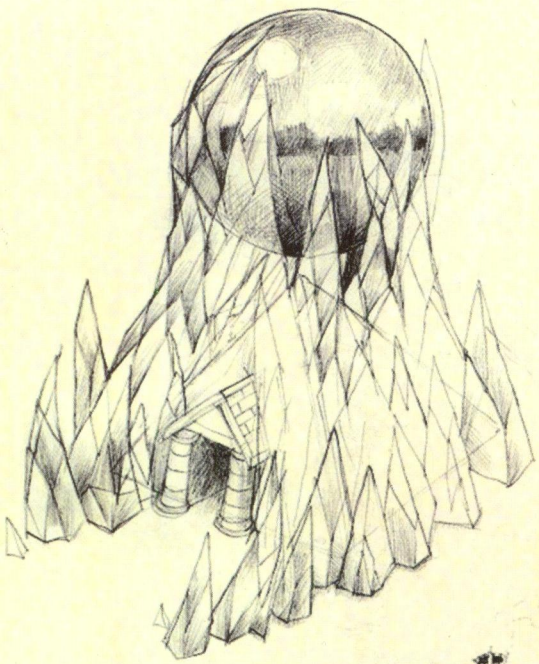
TOWN HALL

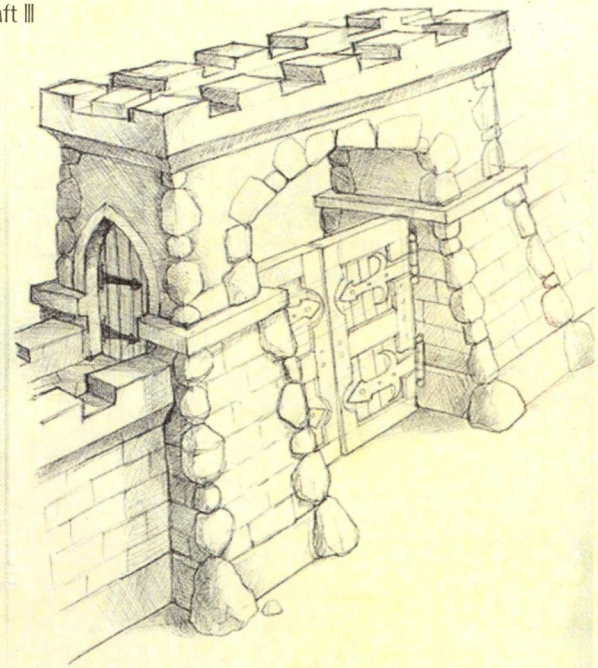


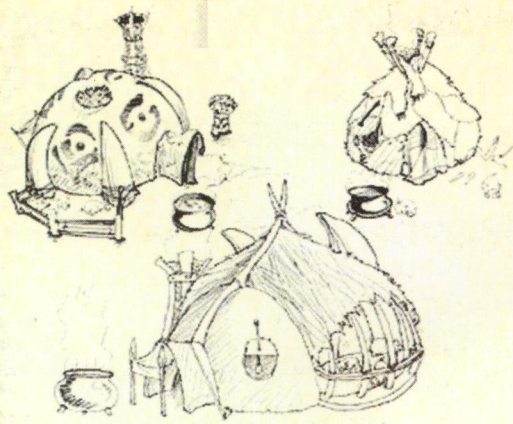
TOWN HALL
Warcraft III

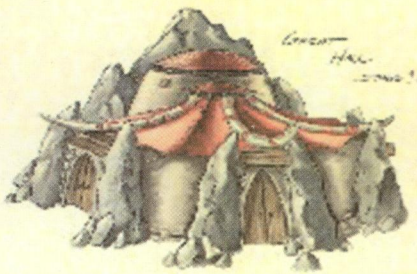
GATE

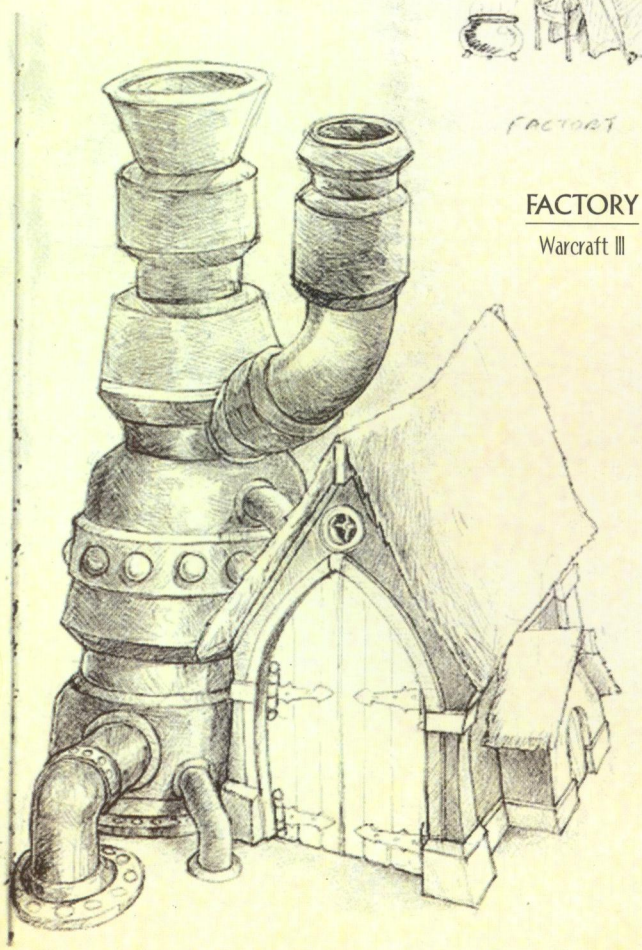
Warcraft III







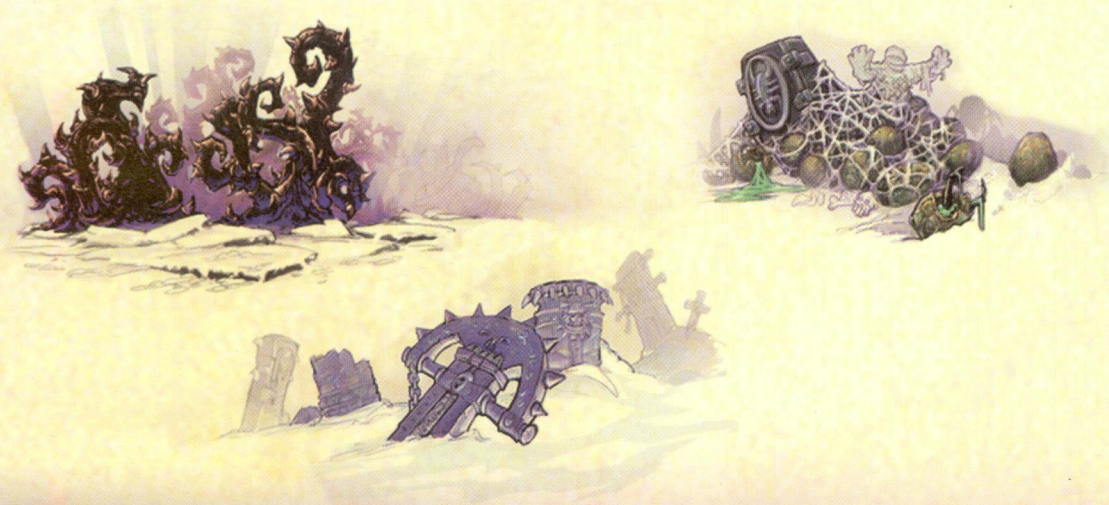




FACTORY

Warcraft III





NORTHREND CONCEPTS

Warcraft III

ORC VS. WENDIGO

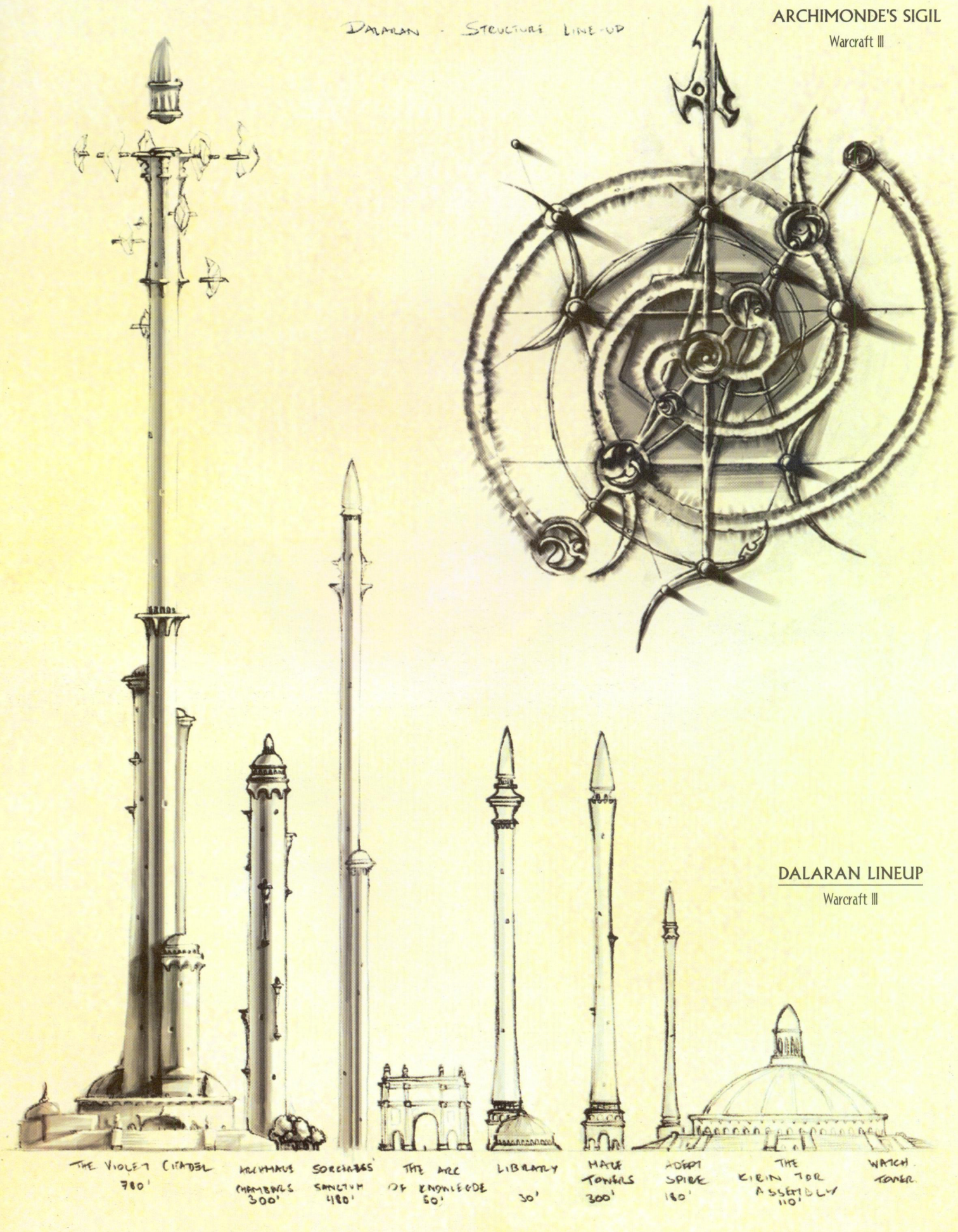
Warcraft III



WORLD TREE

Warcraft III

NORDRASSIL, THE WORLD TREE — The night elf race is forever linked with The World Tree, which spawns all other aspects and 'arms' of the Sentinels from its high perch atop Mount Hyjal.



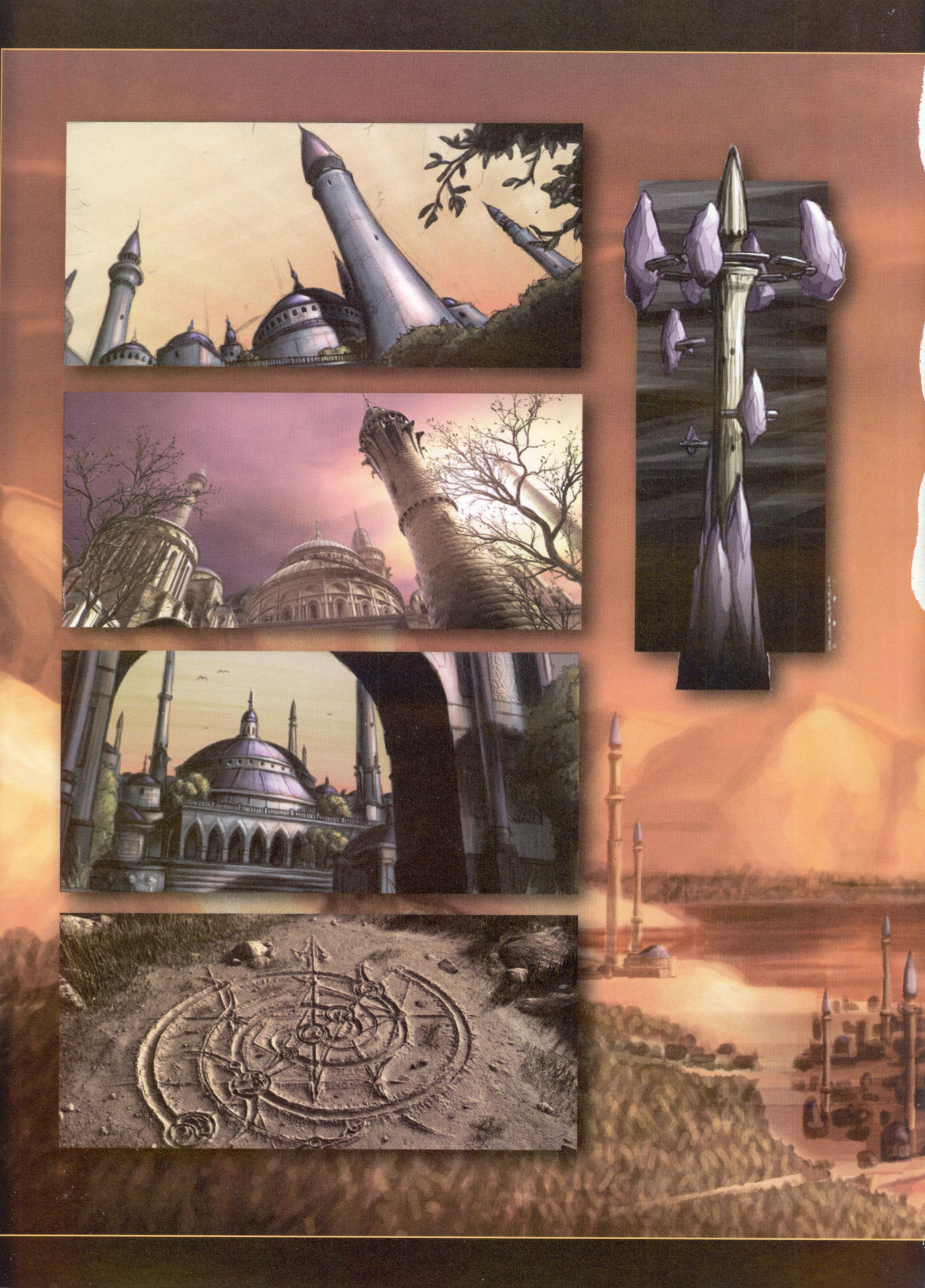
ARCHIMONDE'S SIGIL

Warcraft III

DALARAN LINEUP

Warcraft III





DALARAN PANORAMA AND CONCEPTS

Warcraft III




FOR EVERY KILL IN BATTLE, THE TAUREN BRAIDS A SECTION OF HIS COAT. LEGEND HAS IT THAT WARL STONEHORNE HAD 87 BRAIDS ON HIS HIDE UPON HIS DEATH.
EACH TAUREN CARRIES A SACRED WRAP AND BUNDLE. VARIOUS TOTEMS, HERBS AND WARDS ARE KEPT TO PROTECT AGAINST THE FEVER
HELPED STOP THE REGADE BULL "GORM THE THUNDERER"
EACH SYMBOL REPRESENTS AN ACT OF BRAVERY OR COURAGE IN THE TAURENS LIFE.
STORM HAMMER PRIEST
SAW THE SACRED WAR HAWK"
TEN YEARS IN THE COUNCIL OF ELDERS
HOLES AND GROOVES CAUSE SPEAR TO "SING" WHEN SWUNG OR THRUST
CHIPPED ON KHAN AXUS' SKULL
SHOWS COMPLETE HISTORY OF BATTLES AND LISTS OWNERS OF SPEAR SINCE ITS FORGING.
NOTCHED ON STEEL
PIECE OF HORN FROM ORIGINAL HELM OWNER OF SPEAR - STROMBUL



CENTAUR KHAN ART

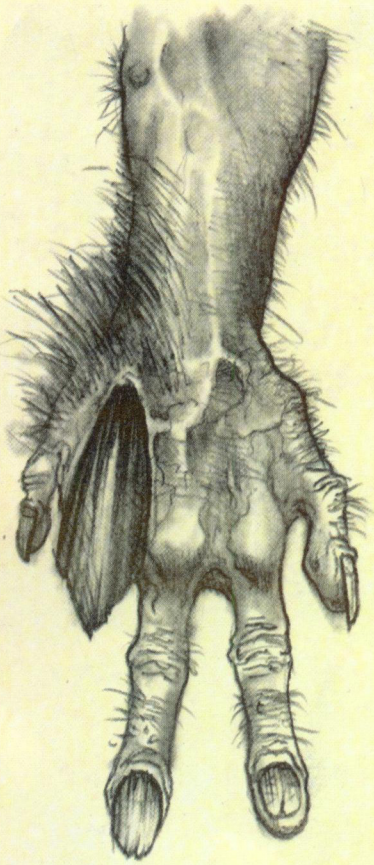
Warcraft III

MARAUDERS ARE TERRIFIED BY THE MANY MOODS OF NATURE. THUNDER-STORMS, HAIL AND LIGHTNING SEND THEM HOWLING TO THEIR TENTS AND SHELTERS.



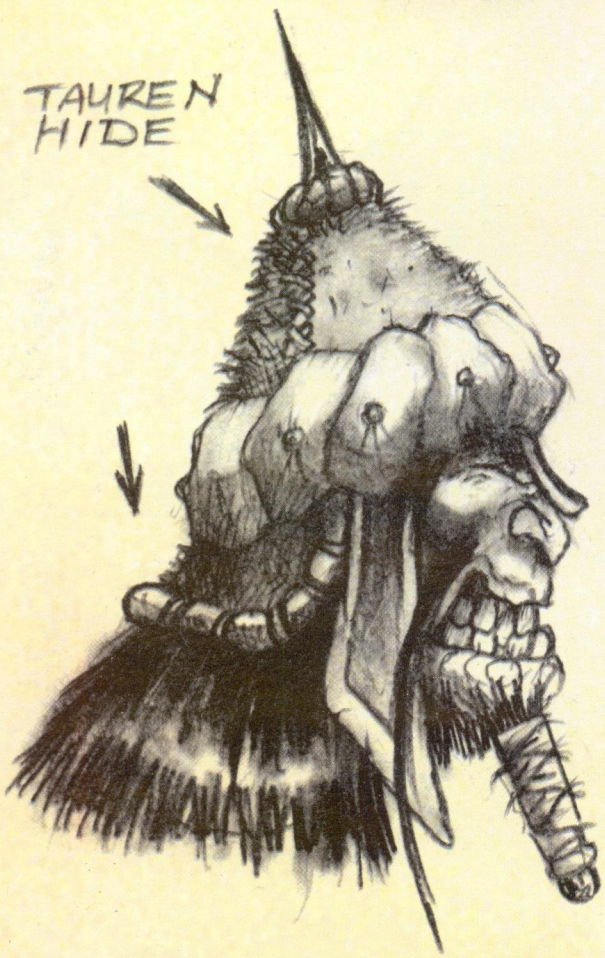
STONE CLUBS AND AXES ARE THE MOST COMMON WEAPONS AMONG THE HERDS.





ALL BREEDING IS KEPT WITHIN A HERD, SO THERE ARE MANY OF THE MARAUDERS BEARING THE MARKS OF DEFORMITY

TAUREN HIDE

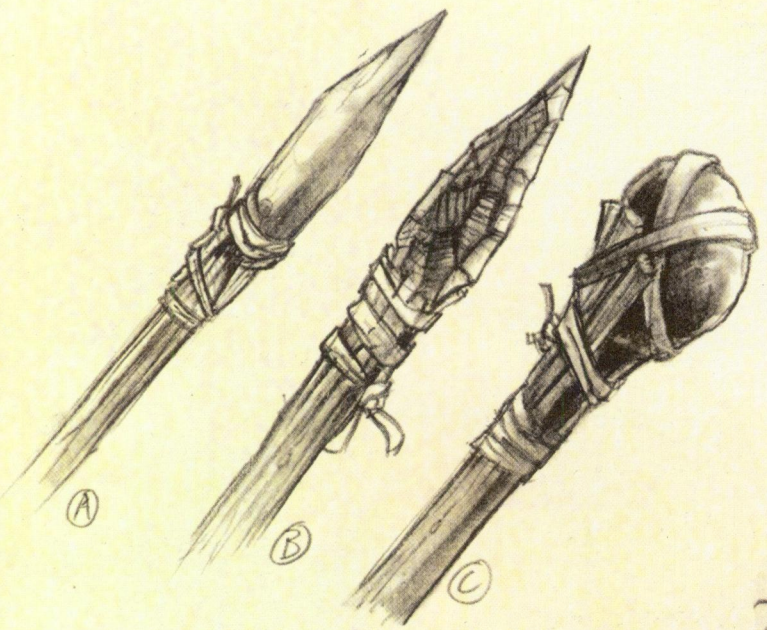


THE HERDS HIGHLY PRIZE WEAPONS OF STEEL. HAVING NO WAY TO FORGE THESE WEAPONS, MOST OF THE HERDS USE BONE, STONE AND HORN TO MAKE THEIR WEAPONS.

Ⓐ TOOTH OR BONE ARROWHEAD

Ⓑ OBSIDIAN ARROWHEAD
VERY SHARP BUT CHIPS EASILY

Ⓒ BLUNTED ARROWHEAD -
USED TO STUN OR SUBDUE PREY





A COMMON MARAUDER
HAS SQUAT FEATURES,

KHAN BLOODHOOFS EMBLEM







CINEMATIC SCENES

Warcraft III









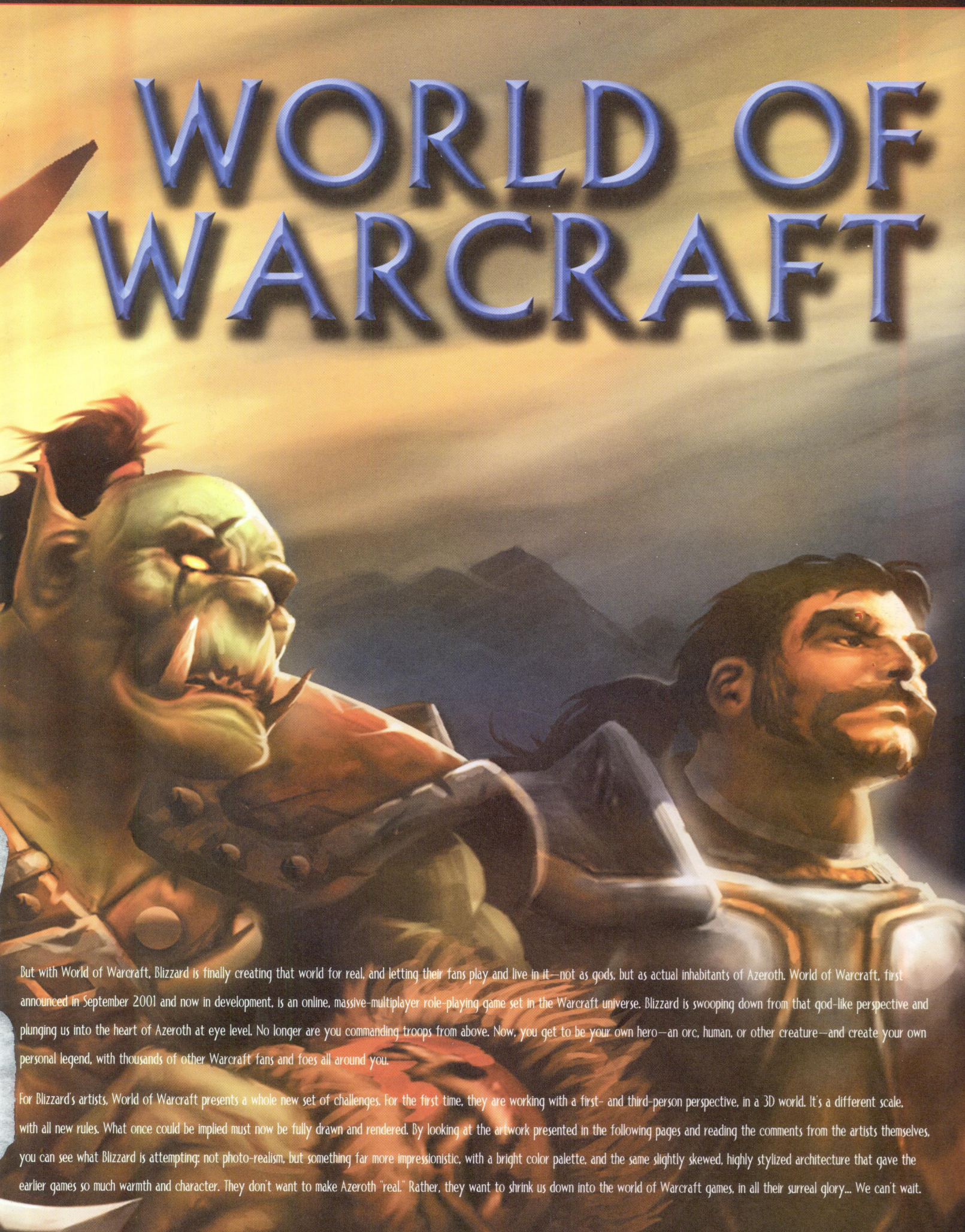




For years, the Warcraft universe has been visible only from above. The strategy games have put us in the role of gods, or puppeteers, manipulating the events in Azeroth from a position high in the clouds. The fact that we've grown so attached to those tiny orcs and humans down there is a remarkable testament to Blizzard's artistic trickery. What could have been just another collection of animated chess pieces instead became a whole world, with a story and personality—a history with real heroes and villains.

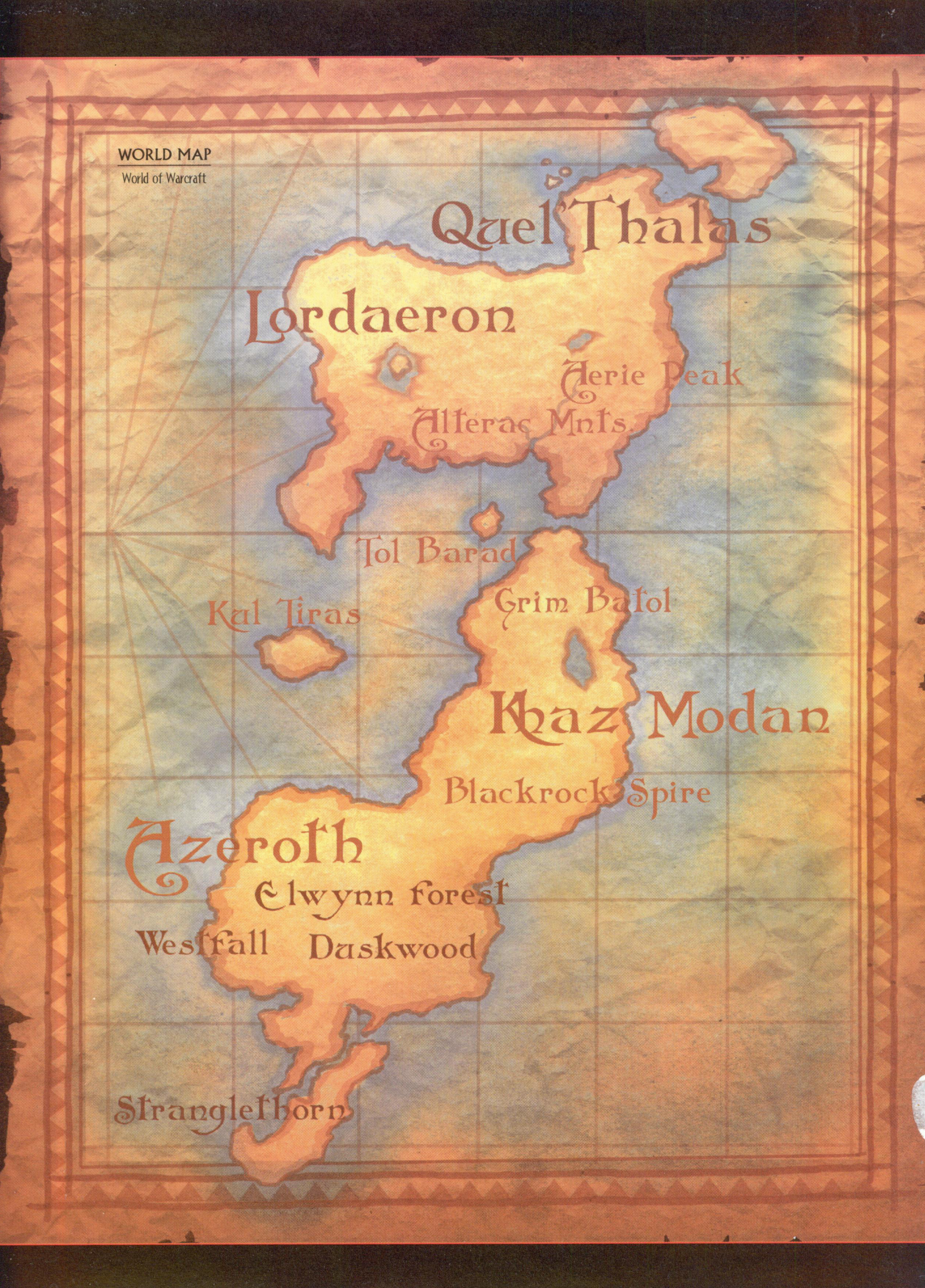
In truth, that feat was done largely with smoke and mirrors. The cinematics, the game manuals, and our own imaginations helped bring those little creatures to life. But in the end, they are still game pieces—pawns, knights, and bishops for the digital generation.

WORLD OF WARCRAFT



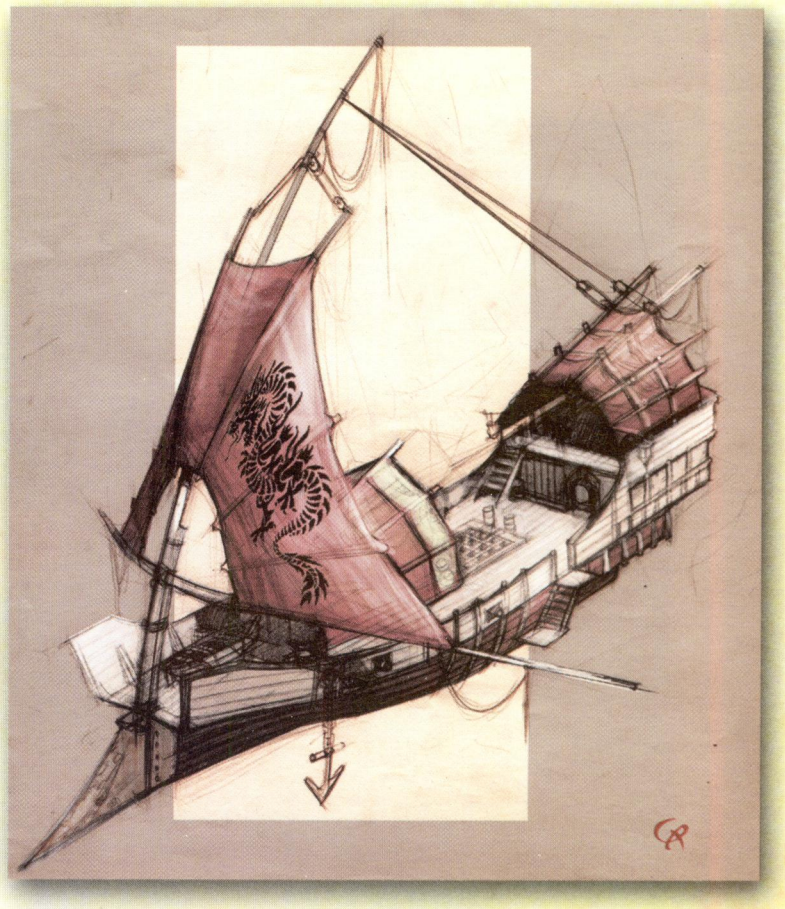
But with World of Warcraft, Blizzard is finally creating that world for real, and letting their fans play and live in it—not as gods, but as actual inhabitants of Azeroth. World of Warcraft, first announced in September 2001 and now in development, is an online, massive-multiplayer role-playing game set in the Warcraft universe. Blizzard is swooping down from that god-like perspective and plunging us into the heart of Azeroth at eye level. No longer are you commanding troops from above. Now, you get to be your own hero—an orc, human, or other creature—and create your own personal legend, with thousands of other Warcraft fans and foes all around you.

For Blizzard's artists, World of Warcraft presents a whole new set of challenges. For the first time, they are working with a first- and third-person perspective, in a 3D world. It's a different scale, with all new rules. What once could be implied must now be fully drawn and rendered. By looking at the artwork presented in the following pages and reading the comments from the artists themselves, you can see what Blizzard is attempting: not photo-realism, but something far more impressionistic, with a bright color palette, and the same slightly skewed, highly stylized architecture that gave the earlier games so much warmth and character. They don't want to make Azeroth "real." Rather, they want to shrink us down into the world of Warcraft games, in all their surreal glory... We can't wait.


WORLD MAP
World of Warcraft
Quel'Thalas
Lordaeron
Aerie Peak
Alterac Mnts.
Tol Barad
Kal Tiras
Grim Batol
Khaz Modan
Blackrock Spire
Azeroth
Elwynn Forest
Westfall
Duskwood
Stranglethorn

ELVEN CRUISER

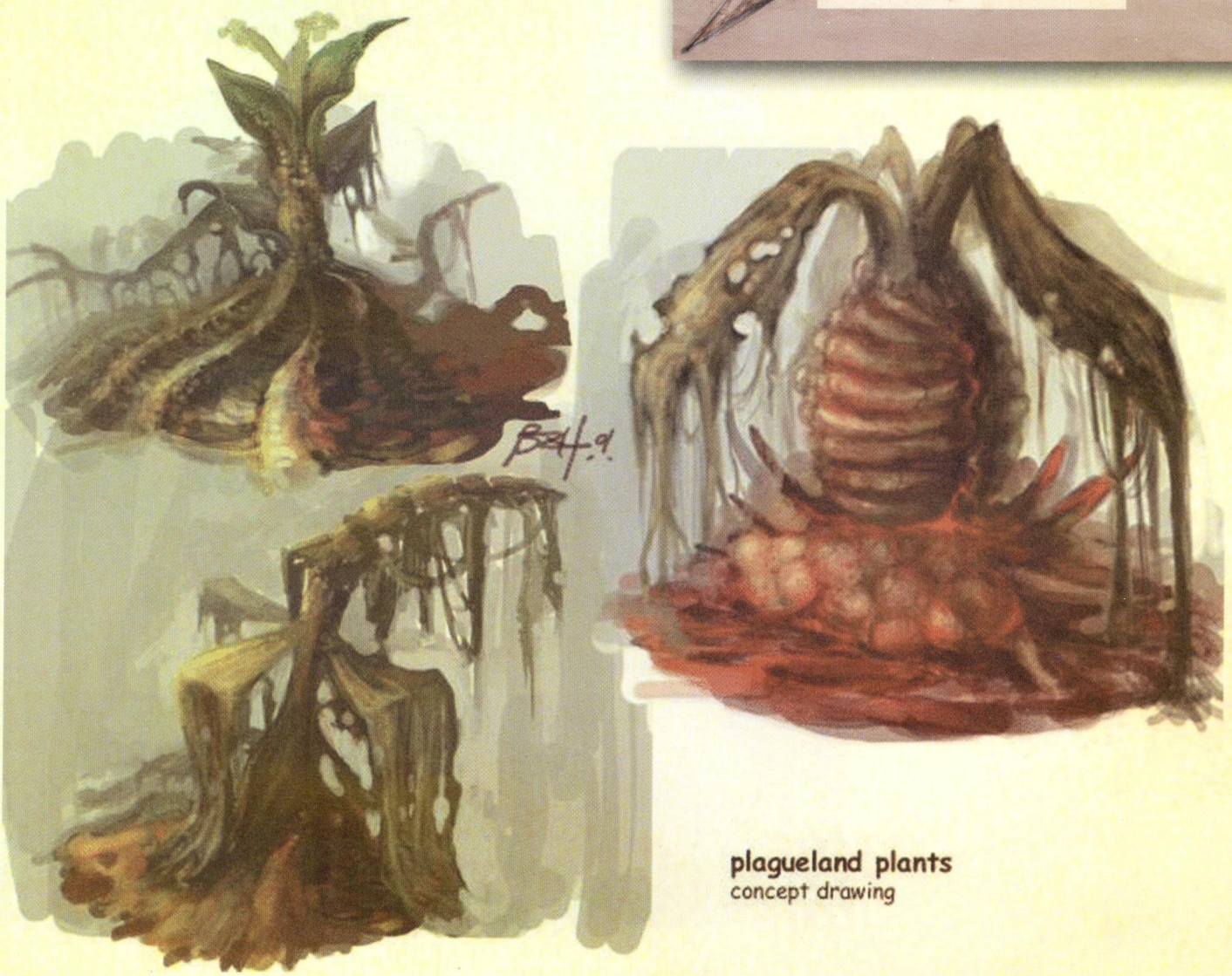
World of Warcraft



PLAGUELANDS FOREST

World of Warcraft

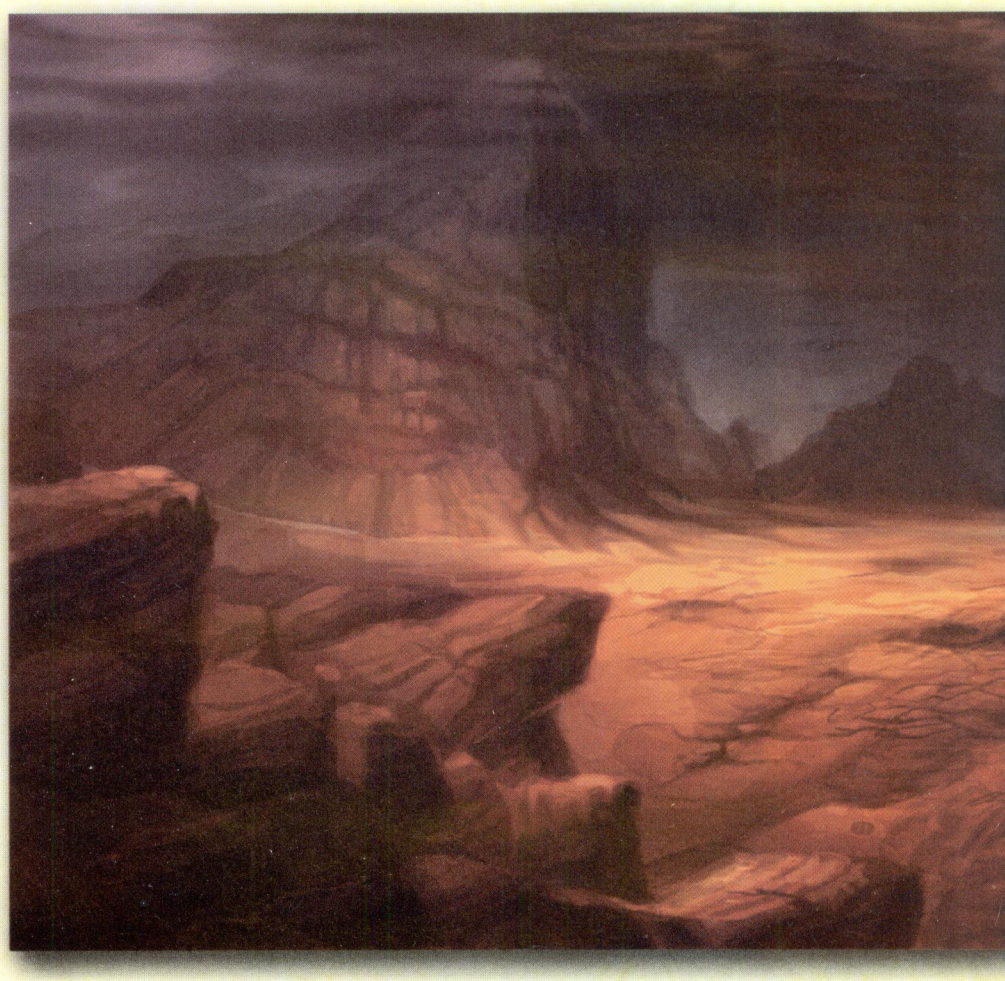




plagueland plants
concept drawing



SILLITHUS
World of Warcraft





TRANSLATING AN ISOMETRIC WORLD INTO THE WORLD OF WARCRAFT PARADIGM...

"With the rich history of the Warcraft universe over the years, we needed to develop a fresh look to World of Warcraft, but also maintain the tradition of Warcraft. In the early stages of development, we experimented with several treatments, including a realistic look to the game models. With this treatment, however, it no longer resembled a Warcraft game. We wanted to create a rich, handcrafted, painted look to our game, deciding to stay away from a rendered, filtered computer feel. So we stepped back and reviewed the old sketches from the Blizzard archives, then dug through these concepts to restore the original lifeblood of Warcraft. Warcraft III's unique and vibrant look already provided a template to work from. From there, our art team began to create the art style for World of Warcraft.

"It's a group effort at Blizzard; many artists are involved in multiple aspects of game art creation. The art team is very passionate about games, so gameplay is a critical element that always plays a factor in game art creation."



BLASTEDLANDS
World of Warcraft



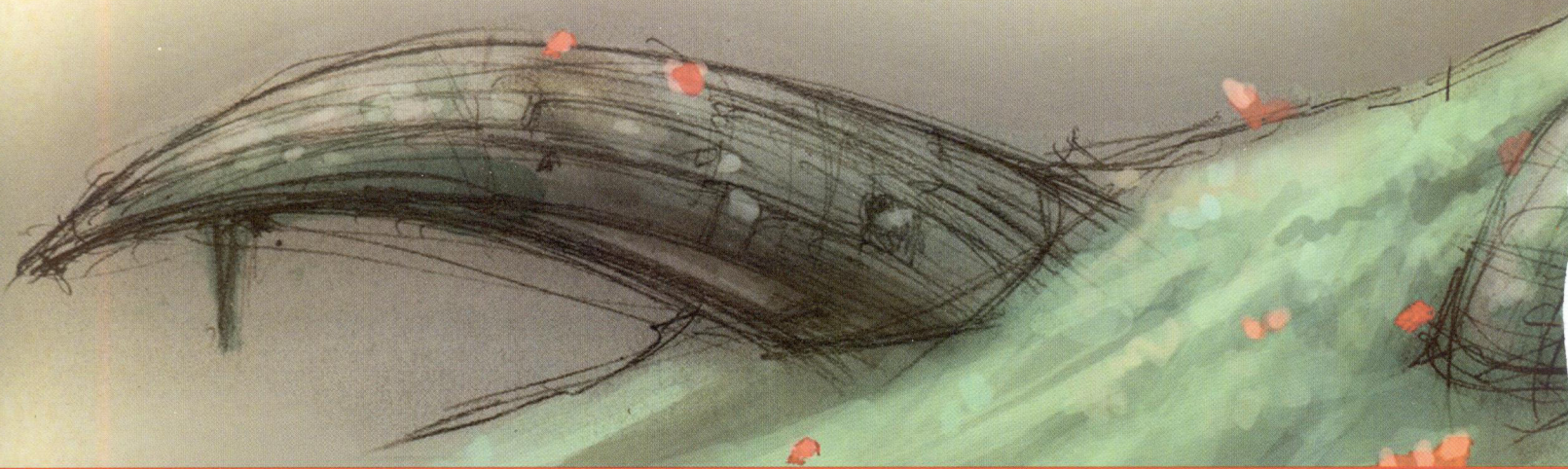
SOUTHERN DESOLACE

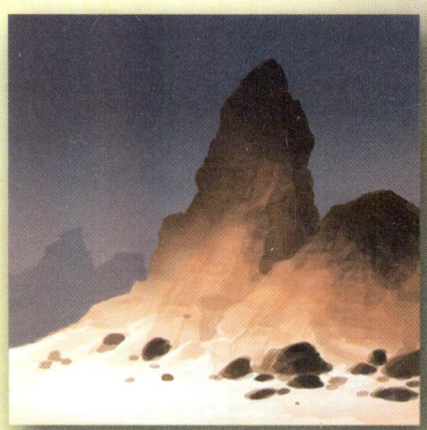
World of Warcraft



DESOLACE

World of Warcraft





SILLITHUS MOUNTAIN RANGE

World of Warcraft

GLAIVE OF THE MASTER

World of Warcraft

TAKING THE LEVEL OF DETAIL IN THE WARCRAFT REALM TO NEW HEIGHTS...

"With the size and depth of the project, there is an incredible opportunity to have direct impact for the artists. It's exciting to see new areas of the world appear around you. Many of the landmarks and inhabitants of the Warcraft world will be visualized, and we look forward to interacting with them in the game."



NAGA MYRMIDON
World of Warcraft



KOBOLD TUNNELER
World of Warcraft



GHOUL
World of Warcraft

BOOTY BAY DOCK

World of Warcraft





TIRISFAL GLADES AT NIGHT

World of Warcraft



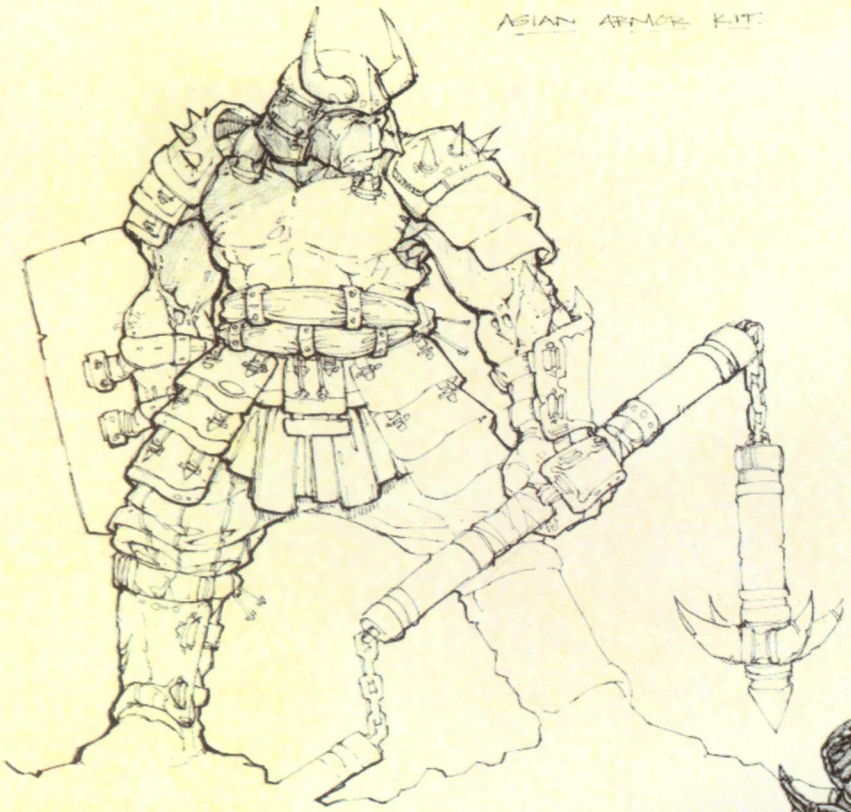
ELWYNN COLOR STUDY

World of Warcraft

THUNDER CLIFFS

World of Warcraft

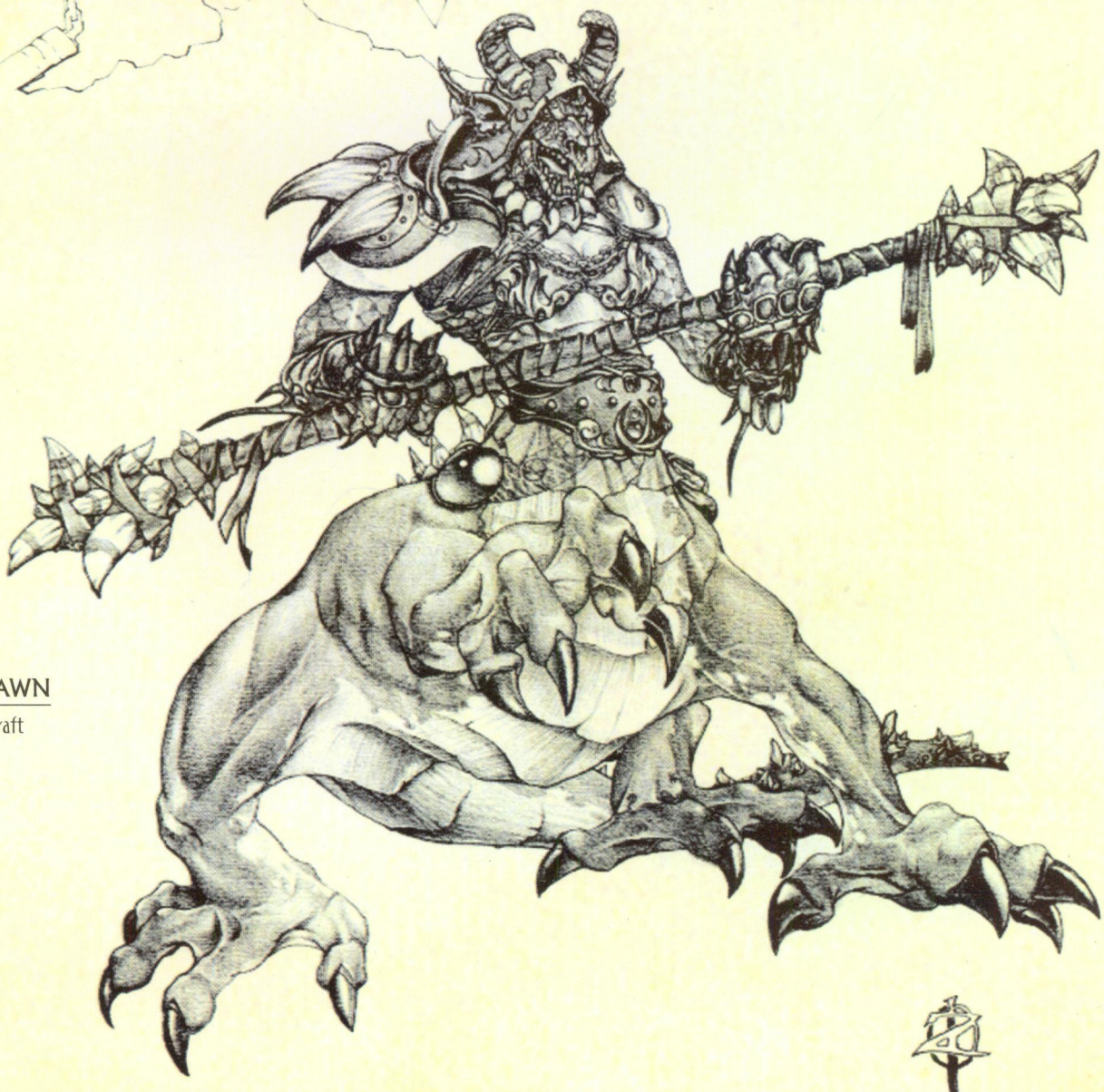




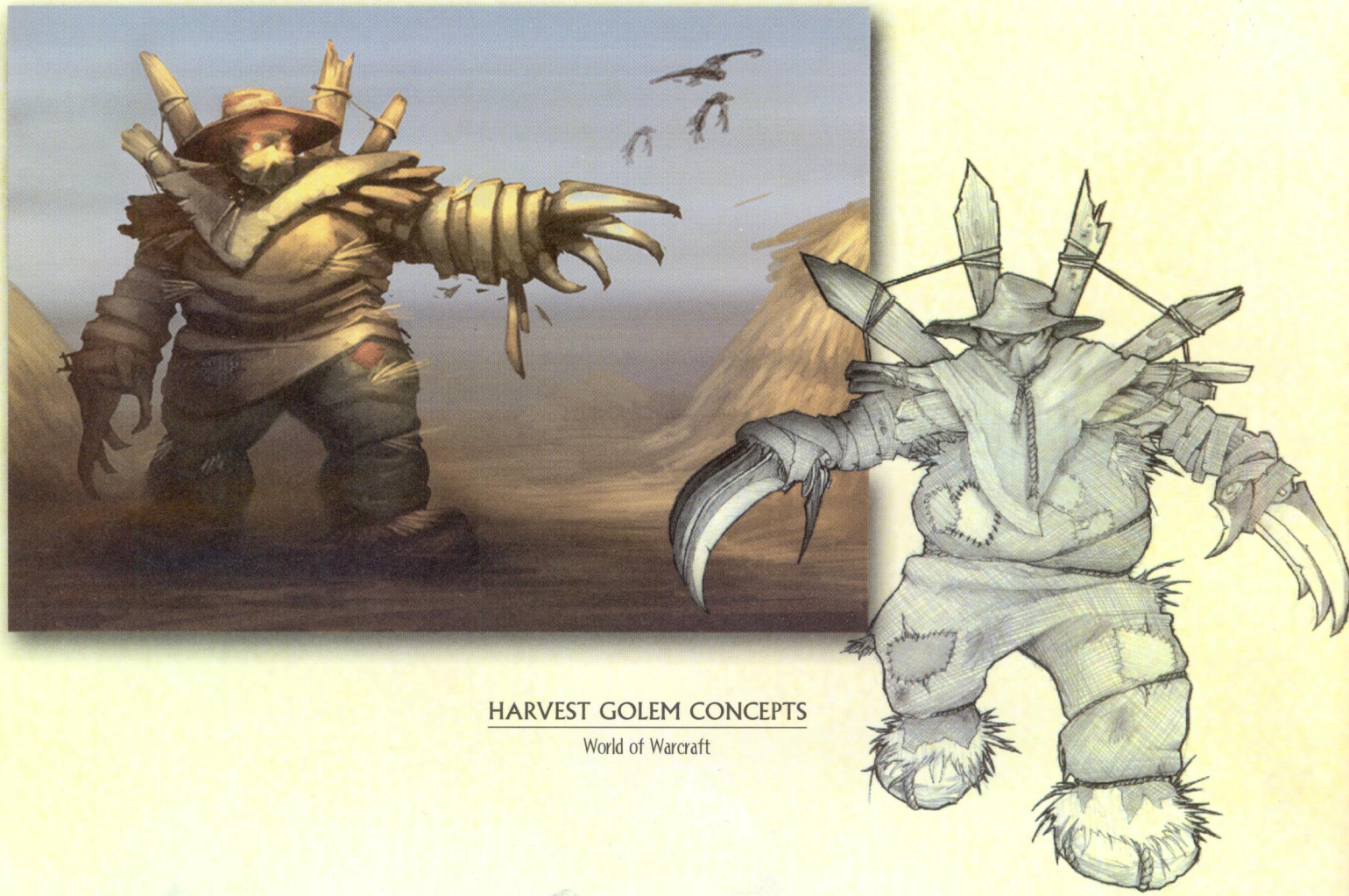
ORC WARRIOR
World of Warcraft



CHANNEL STATUE
World of Warcraft

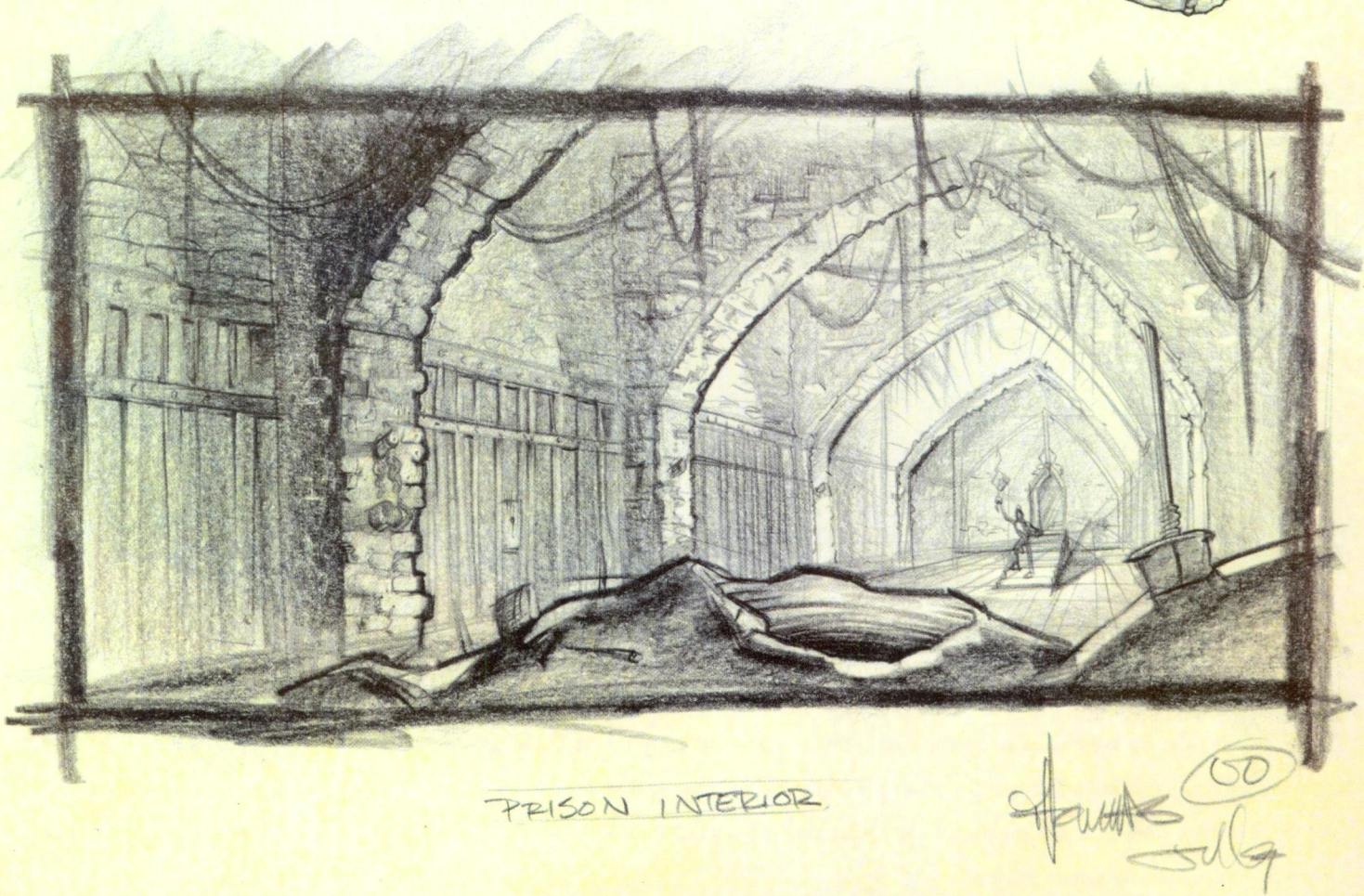


DRAGONSPAWN
World of Warcraft



HARVEST GOLEM CONCEPTS

World of Warcraft



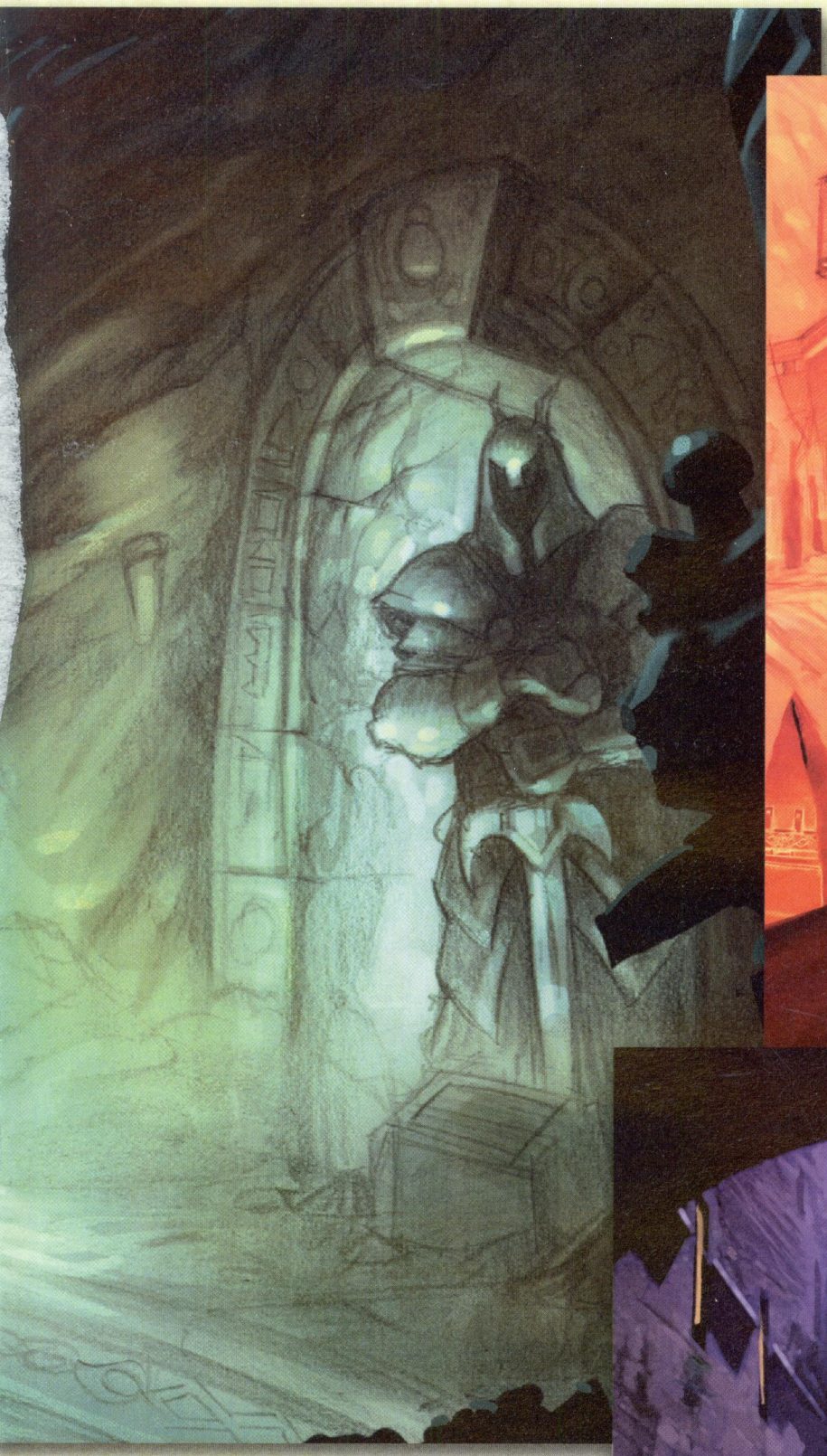


DUSKWOOD KNIGHTS HOLLOW

World of Warcraft

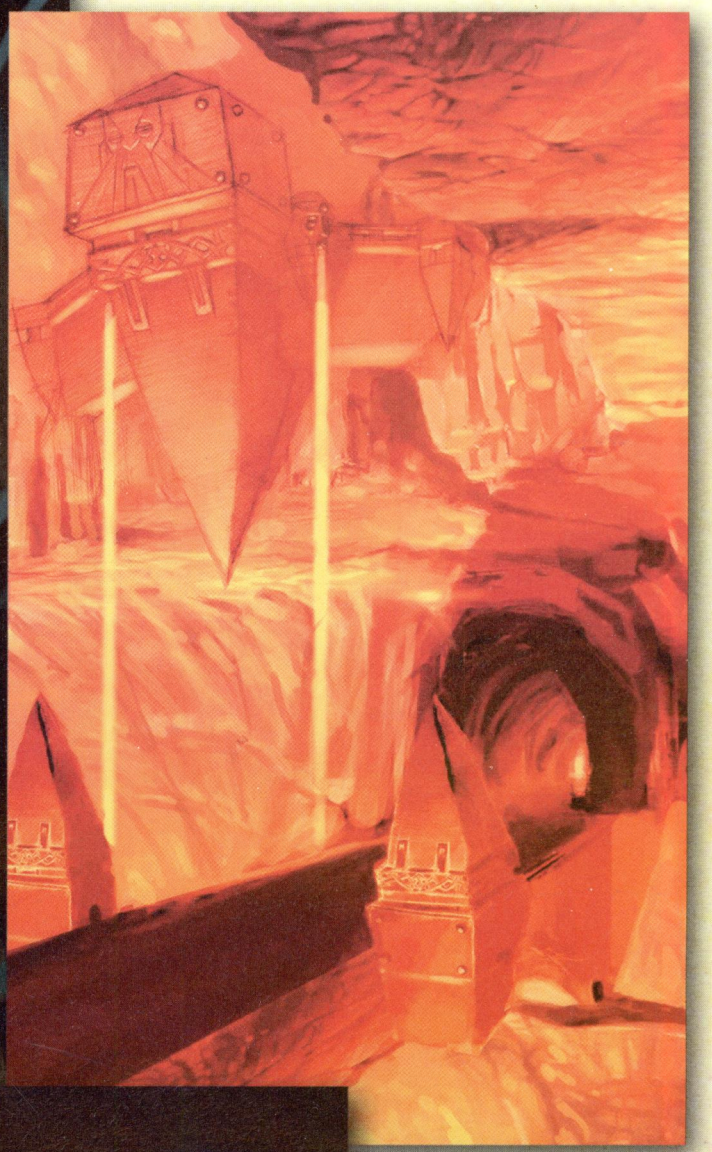
OVERCOMING THE ARTISTIC CHALLENGES OF THE FIRST-PERSON PERSPECTIVE...

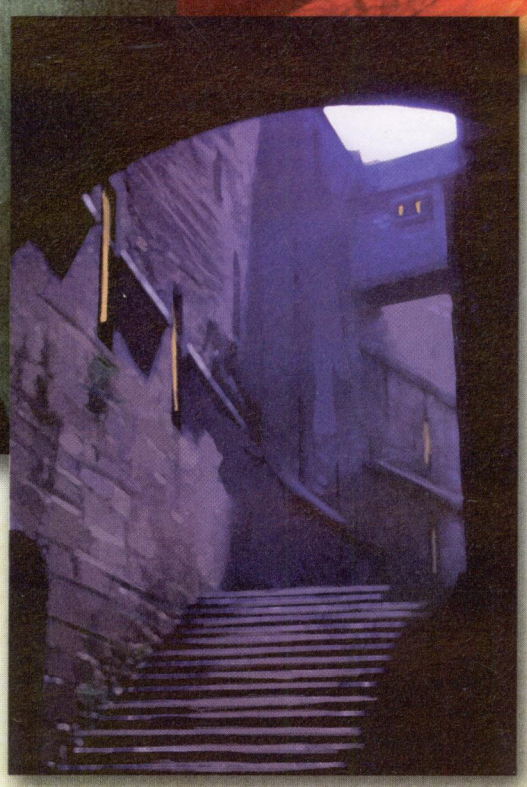
"Immersion is they key. It's really all about creating a world that feels alive with all of the details one would expect to see in a real world, while making sure that they have the impact that people will expect from the franchise. With the size and scope of the project, it's important to remain focused and remember the gameplay issues at hand. We often try to develop the illusion of detail and suggest more than what we can actually create. The challenge for game–artists lies in creating visuals while working with limited polygons and low texture memory."



HEART OF BLACKROCK SPIRE

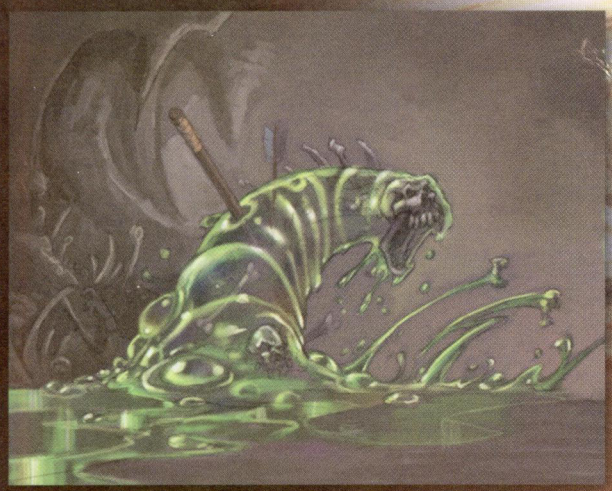
World of Warcraft





SHADOWFANG KEEP

World of Warcraft



SLIMER

World of Warcraft



DEADWIND PASS

World of Warcraft



BURNING STEPPES

World of Warcraft

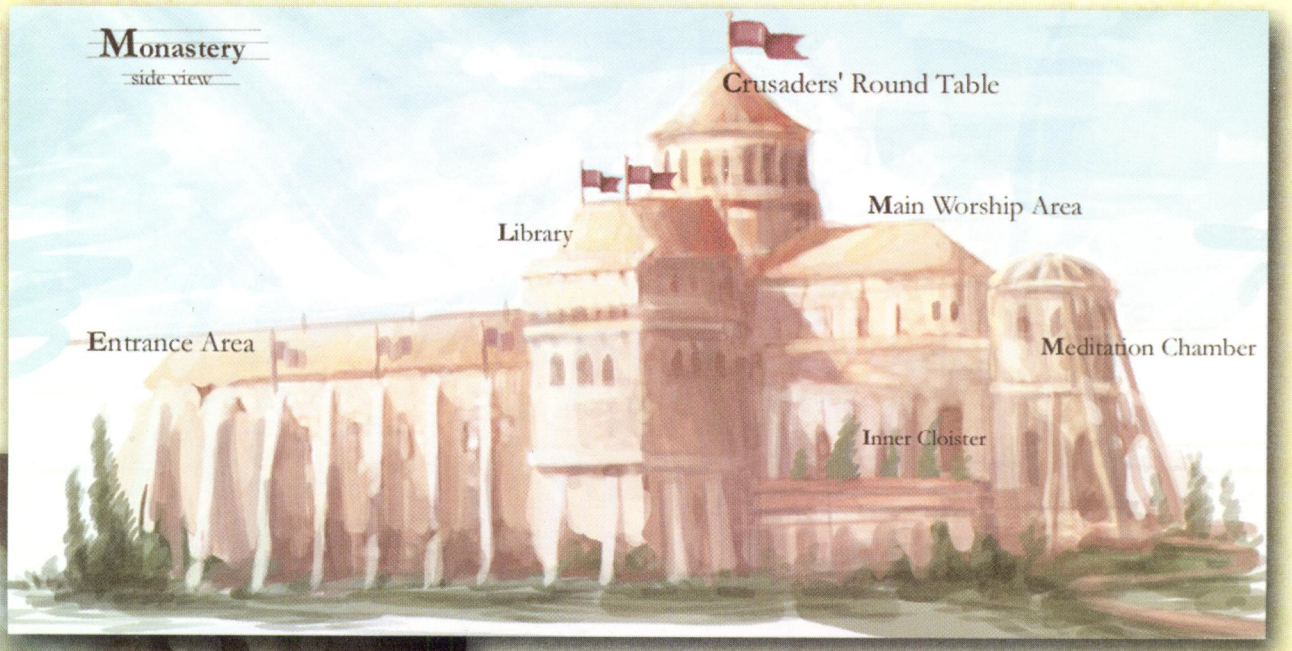
RAZORFEN DOWNS

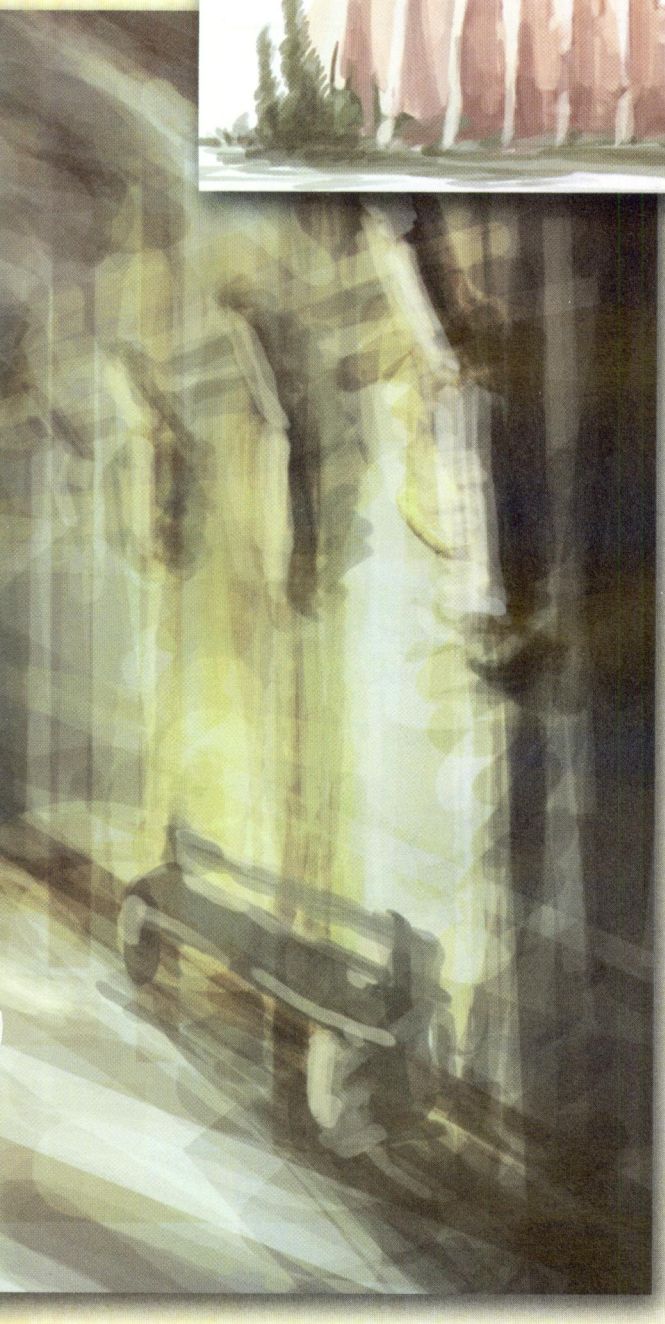
World of Warcraft

MONASTERY CONCEPTS

World of Warcraft



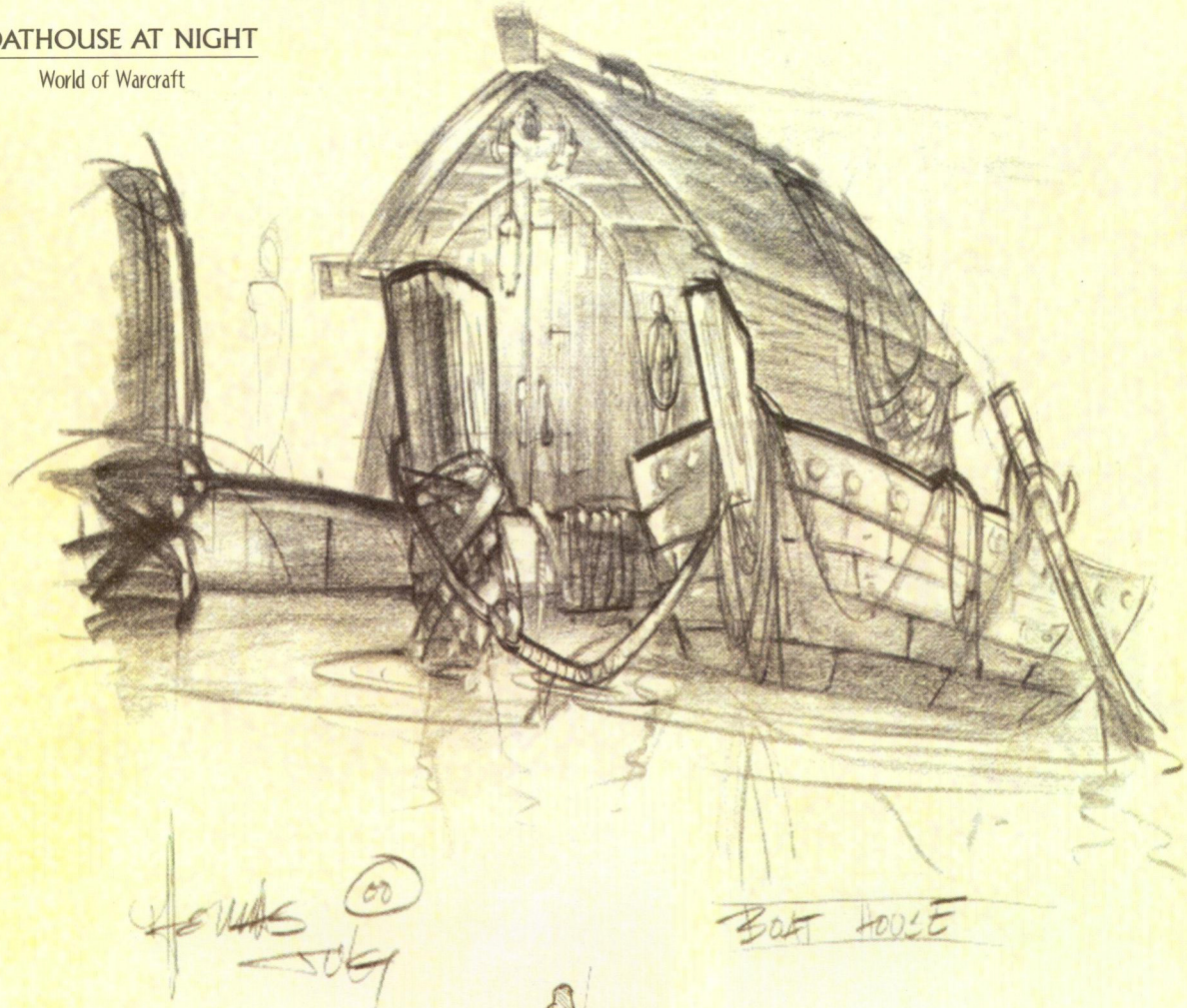

Monastery
side view
Crusaders' Round Table
Main Worship Area
Library
Entrance Area
Meditation Chamber
Inner Cloister





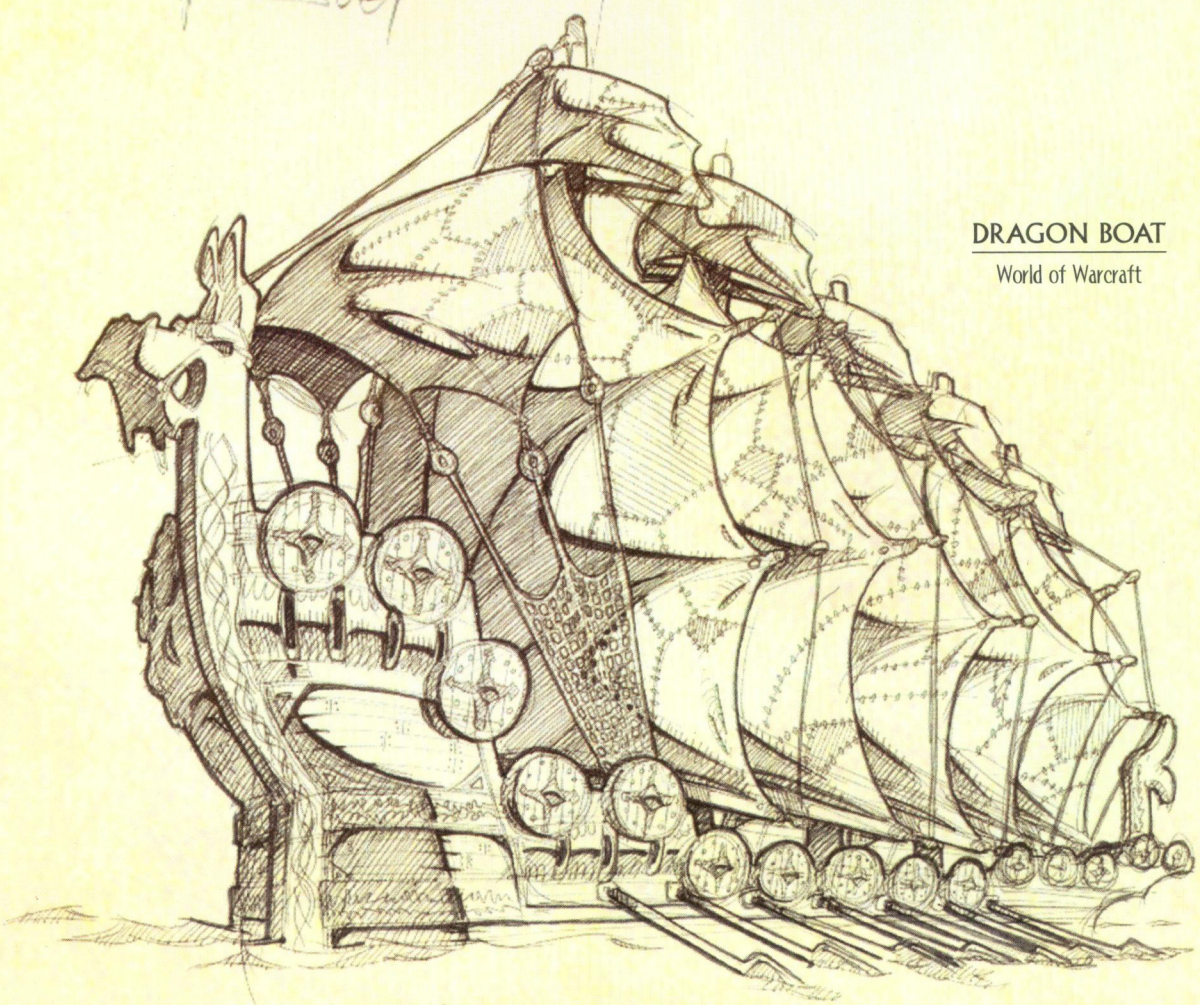
BOATHOUSE AT NIGHT

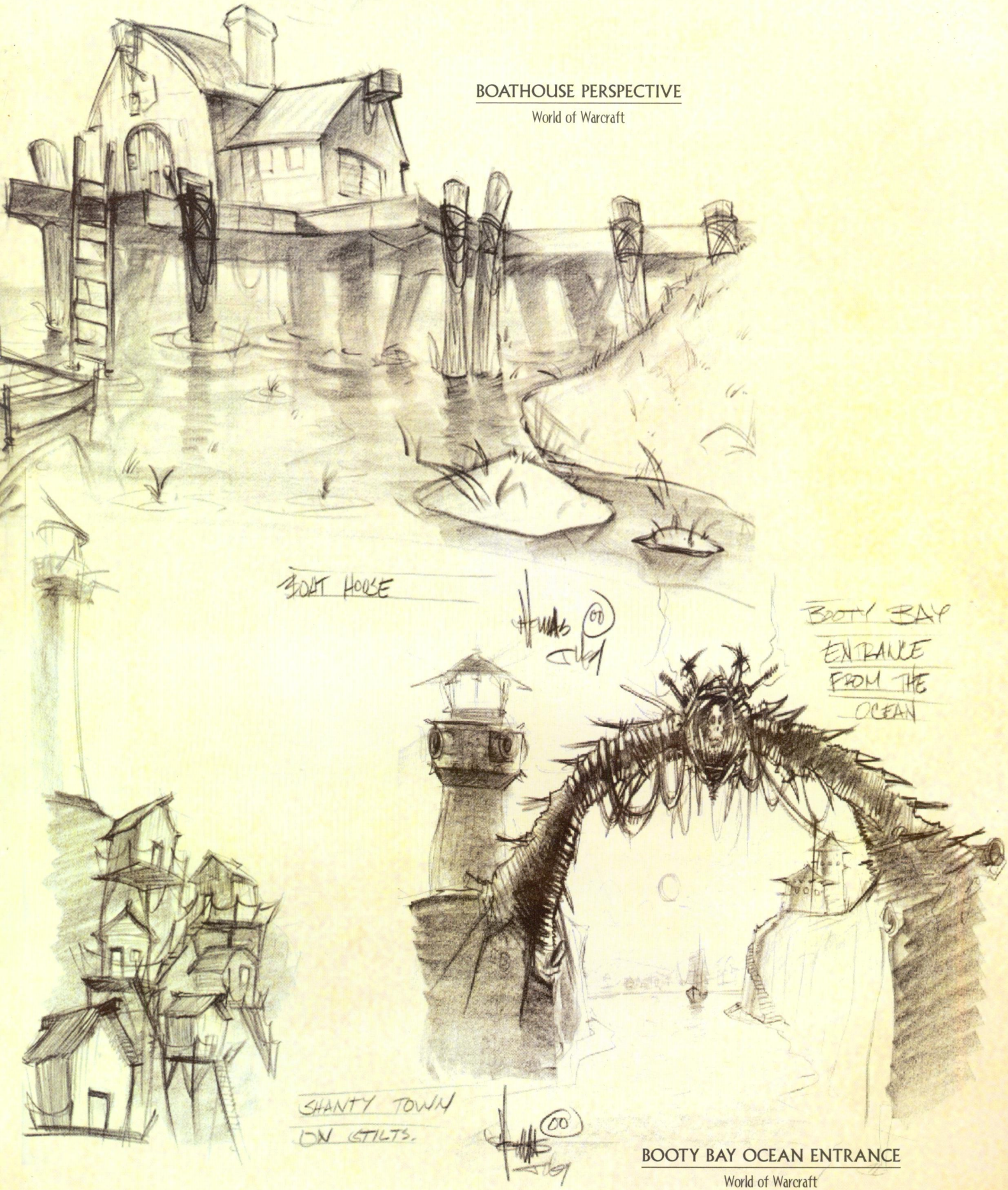
World of Warcraft



DRAGON BOAT

World of Warcraft



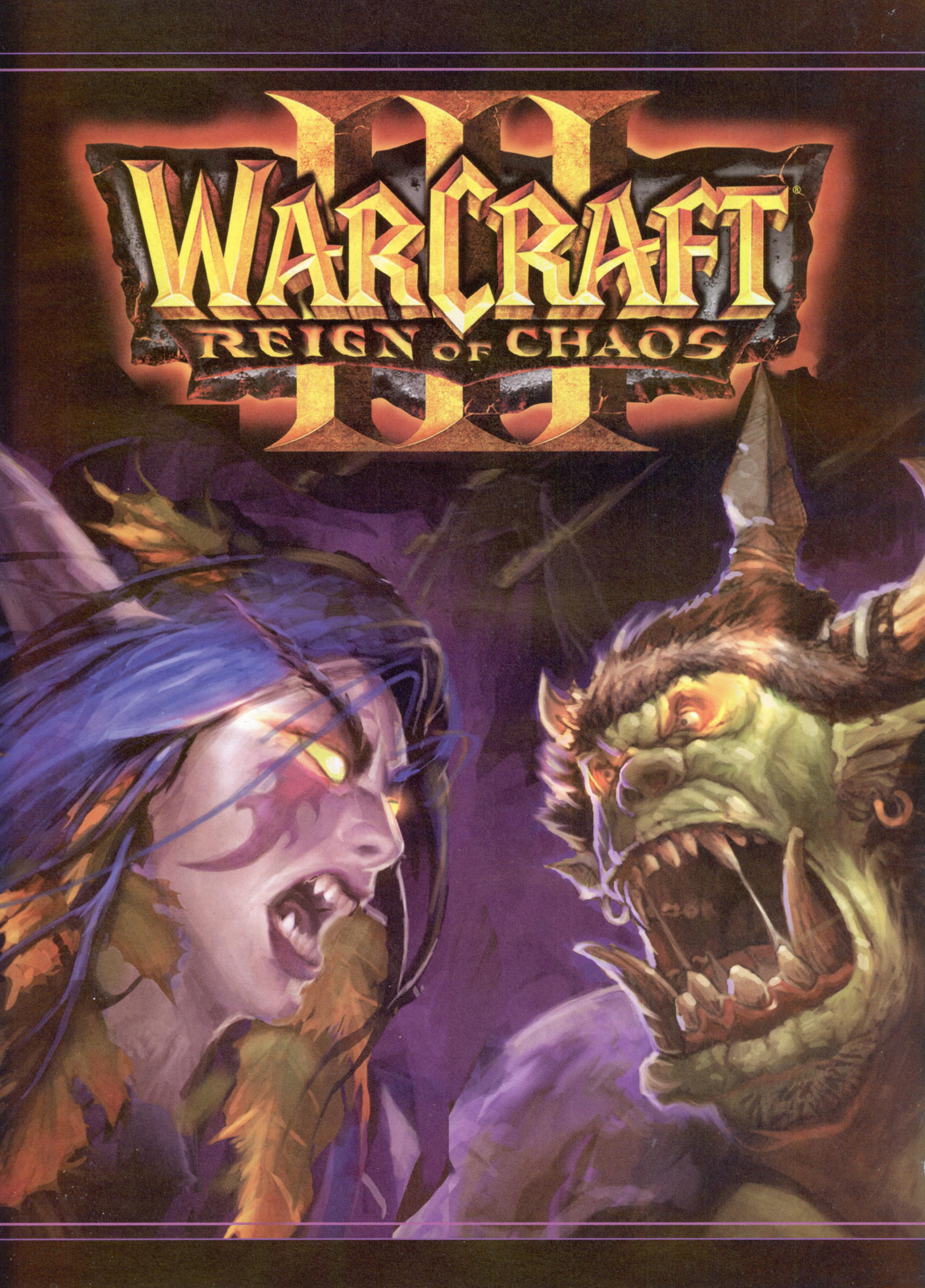


BOATHOUSE PERSPECTIVE

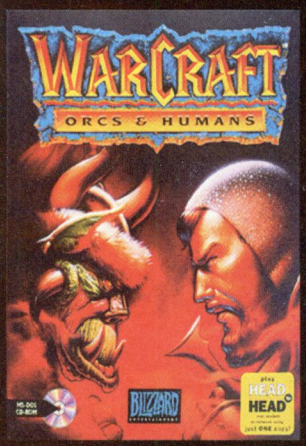
World of Warcraft

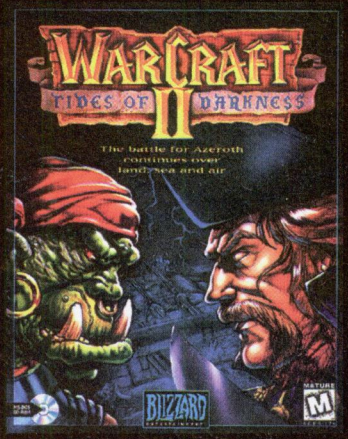
BOOTY BAY OCEAN ENTRANCE

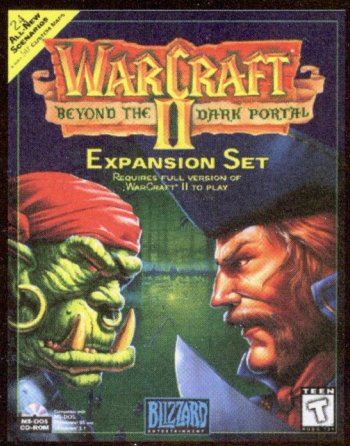
World of Warcraft

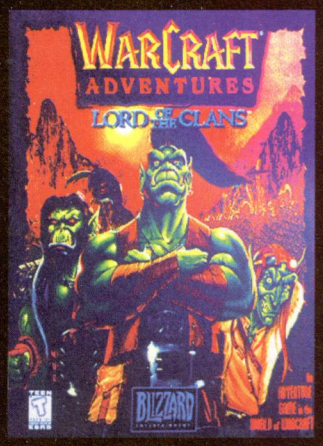

WARCRAFT III
REIGN OF CHAOS

MISCELLANEOUS









The culture at Blizzard is casual and relaxed, but still intensely teeming with the energy of a hive; the people are very focused on their daily goals, yet still dreaming of the distant possibilities that lie ahead. It is an environment rife with fascinating contradictions, and this is what makes it so unique.

Visitors are easily identifiable as such from the strong knot of brotherhood that all Blizzard employees share, but guests are nonetheless welcomed seamlessly into the fold to briefly experience the incredible worlds they work to create each day. Everyone on staff is unselfishly willing to offer his or her articulate and enthusiastic thoughts on the inspirations and motives behind the games they craft—both in the past, as well as those yet to come.

These people work long hours, collaborating for years on a single game before it reaches perfection. So how, you ask, are employees working tirelessly toward lofty goals able to maintain, even exude, such a positive demeanor? The answer is quite simple really: They're happy.

They love what they do and this passion, combined with the remarkable talent already within them, shines through in everything they do.

A natural product of this atmosphere is humor, which Blizzard judiciously sprinkles atop its Warcraft games as a kind of pressure valve from the intensity of the subject matter. The outlet is perhaps most necessary for the hard-working folks at Blizzard, who tap into this well just often enough to avoid taking themselves too seriously.

This light-hearted humility is best represented in Blizzard's annual Christmas card designs. Indeed, there is a unique side to these artists and thinkers that is visible only through some peripheral activities. That's what this section is all about. Although the art shown here does not fit tidily into a particular category, it may perhaps tell you the most about the people who created it.

BLIZZARD
GREETING CARD

Christmas 2001



COVER ART FOR

WARCRAFT: DAY OF THE DRAGON

published by Pocket Books and written by Richard A. Knaak





COVER ART FOR POCKET BOOKS E-BOOK

WARCRAFT: OF BLOOD AND HONOR

written by Chris Metzen



COVER ART FOR
WARCRAFT: LORD OF THE CLANS
published by Pocket Books and written by Christie Golden



BLIZZARD GREETING CARD

Christmas 1999


SAMWISE
99

MYSTERIES IN THE DETAILS – Look closely at the art and you may find some hidden gems buried within the action. We've revealed a few of the mysterious oddities on this page.



Why is this cute little panda mixed up in an epic battle? It's the trademark of this artist and so the fuzzy mammal finds it way into many of his drawings (see also page 168).





Here we see the letters "T-E-E" spelled across the undead armor. This is the nickname for someone important to the artist, which he deftly ensconsed within the chaos of this scene.



The Sentinel warrior shown here wielding a curved moon weapon is no longer depicted this way in the game. These units now ride atop giant war panthers and carry triple-bladed swords.



Worlds collide as a Hydralisk from StarCraft® briefly joins The Scourge.



The clawed creature shown here was originally called the spirit walker. Its glowing limb denotes commander status within the army. Blizzard later decided to make this just a regular unit, so the art presents an unintended inconsistency with the game.



EDITOR'S NOTE

During the creation of this book, our designer, Ann-Marie, and I flew out to Blizzard to sit down with Creative Director Chris Metzen to discuss the layout of the art. During this meticulous process, we painstakingly, yet lovingly, chose the proper placement for each sketch and cinematic image.

By the time we were about six hours into this, a strange and wonderful thing had happened. Rather than feeling completely spent from listening, talking, and deliberating (not to mention jetlag from our 5:30 a.m. flight), we had actually spun ourselves into an imaginative jam session. Our initially pedestrian conversations led to brainstorming and the brainstorming led to even more fascinating discussions about what went into creating these creatures and, indeed, the entire Warcraft universe. Each of us fed off the energy of the others, our individual ideas leading to enhanced suggestions from the collective group. At one point, Chris even got chills of excitement, having to pause for a moment to collect his thoughts and regain concentration, upon mention that we planned to print full color on the inside front and back cover and could use the orc and human images there.

We were once again three marathon D&D players, so deep into our imaginary realm that it was a bit like waking from a dream when we finally took our first break. It was also the first opportunity for all of us to look back on what we had accomplished and say, "Whoa! That was pretty cool. This book is going to ROCK!"

Fortunately, I recorded the entire session, so nothing that emerged from our think tank was lost to memory. In fact, there were many subtle, but hilarious, moments along the way. I hope you enjoy this collection of Warcraft art even a fraction as much as we did putting it together.

-DAVID B. BARTLEY
SENIOR PROJECT EDITOR,
BRADYGAMES

OUTTAKES FROM BRAINSTORMING SESSIONS

Chris admiring the work of a young artist whom he almost sees now with the moist eyes of a proud parent: "Can you believe this stuff? This dude is a Ninja! That's my boy!"

Only true family could get this personal: "Pardon me. What did I eat today?"

"So, move this image to page 22 or I'll smite you with my Death Shield."

Commenting on the knight art on page 15: "The first time I loaded that art up, I said, 'That's Old School. Dude, that is so, like, 1993!'"

"The detail on this drawing is off the hook!"

"Is the dragon fighter the same guy that sucked the eyes out of the hobgoblin?"

Regarding Blizzard's spin on the traditional notion of Wyverns: "What Sammy ended up doing was making them more, uh... mammalian. Is that a real word? Or does that speak of breasts specifically?"

Said many times: "It's all gravy."

Also said many times: "Yeah, it's all good in the 'hood."

Mystery quote: "If we try to get all of this art on the page, Sammy will not be able to deal with the overwhelming feeling of being simultaneously rejected and accepted by the forces of Mithral."

2D ARTISTS

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Dave Berggren
Nicholas S. Carpenter
Samwise Didier
Allen Dilling
Toph Gorham
Brian Hsu
Trevor Jacobs
Thomas Jung
Roman Kenney
Chris Metzen
Rob McNaughton
Micky Nielson
Bill Petras
Stu Rose
Justin Thavirat
Ru Weerasuriya

CINEMATICS

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John Burnett
Nicholas S. Carpenter
John Chalfant
Jeff Chamberlain
Aaron Chan
Ben Dai
Joe Frayne
Joeyray Hall
Steeg Haskell
Jay Hathaway
Harley D. Huggins II
Jared Keller
Jon Lanz
James McCoy
Matthew Mead
Dennis Price
Matt Samia
Mark Skelton
Patrick Thomas
Seth Thompson
Ru Weerasuriya
Kenson Yu

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Special thanks to Paul W. Sams and everyone at Blizzard for lending their time and talents to the making of this book, especially Elaine Di Iorio, Chris Metzen, and Nick Carpenter. You were a pleasure to work with and your significant contributions to this project were invaluable.

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